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Skin Deep



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LIMITED EDITION COVER · LIMITED EDITION COVER · 203

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OCTOBER 2011
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The needle has landed



Kayla Wren, taken at Tattoo Jam 11

TELEVATORS

The events that follow seem like months and months ago, but now I check my calendar, I see it is only a few weeks.

Once upon a time, my sister told everybody she liked *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. Consequently, every birthday and Christmas that ever came around after that, she got 'Buffy-stuff' until she was sick to death of it. People should be careful what they say they like. At some point in time, I must have said I liked doing radio because on the Friday morning of Tattoo Jam, I was awakened from my beauty sleep yet again (much needed) by a research crew – this time with Nicky Campbell at Radio Five Live – wanting to talk ink live on air.

By some sleight of hand, they also pulled Darryl Gates (Diamond Jacks) into the studio. I was filled with hope. With two of us who knew what we were talking about, how wrong could it go? Well, they could have found the worst horror stories known to man, ensured all the callers had taken a glancing blow from a bus in the last five days, encouraged them in the worst way imaginable and locked both Darryl and myself out of the broadcast.

Which they did.

My favourite waste of time was the guy who thought getting tattooed was a terrible idea because his girlfriend had one on her back and when she came downstairs for a night out in a new dress, she was 'ruined' because her tattoo was now visible and didn't go with the outfit. I was a bit pissed off with the way the show was shaping up by then, so I apologise to all concerned for suggesting he simply get himself a new girlfriend if it was that important to him.

MY FAVOURITE WASTE OF TIME WAS THE GUY WHO THOUGHT GETTING TATTOOED WAS A TERRIBLE IDEA BECAUSE HIS GIRLFRIEND HAD ONE ON HER BACK AND WHEN SHE CAME DOWNSTAIRS FOR A NIGHT OUT IN A NEW DRESS, SHE WAS 'RUINED' BECAUSE HER TATTOO WAS NOW VISIBLE AND DIDN'T GO WITH THE OUTFIT

It was only when David from the Jam-attending Graffiti Life crew called in himself to help out, that we started to get the message across, but I get the feeling they achieved their 'talk-radio' goal all the same. Disappointing.

Which rather prompts the question, is all publicity good publicity? Well, anybody with a brain in their head could see exactly how this had been engineered before we even began, so yes of course it is. I just expected more from a respected radio presenter who had been in the game that long. We all make mistakes in life Mr Premier Inn.

Slayed...



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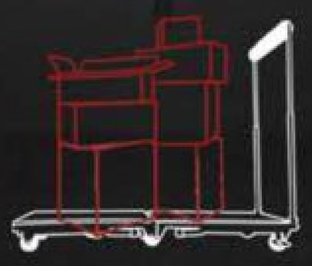
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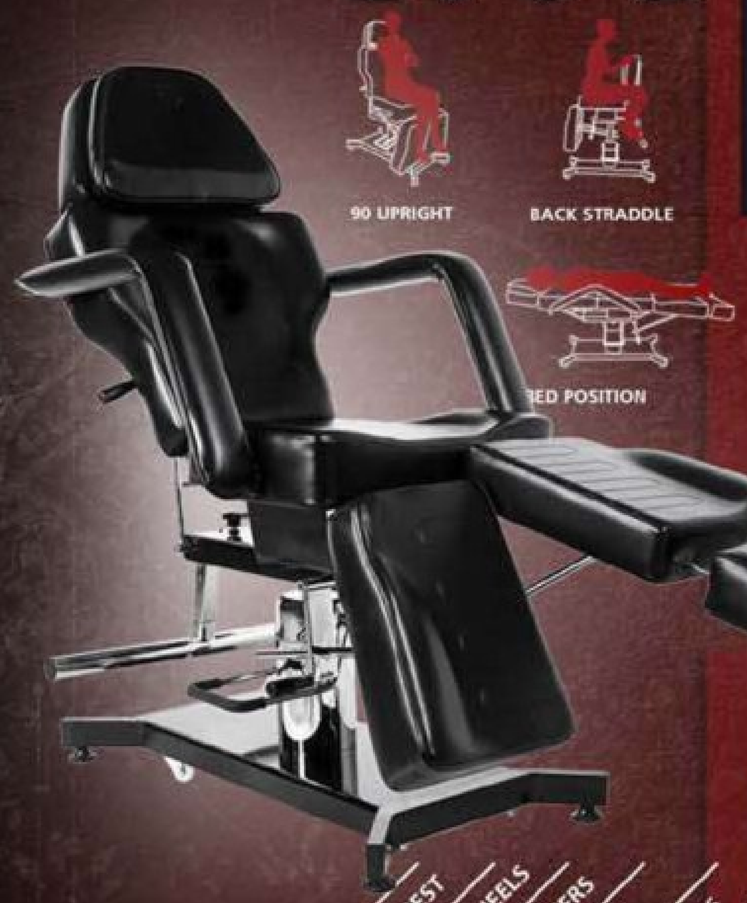
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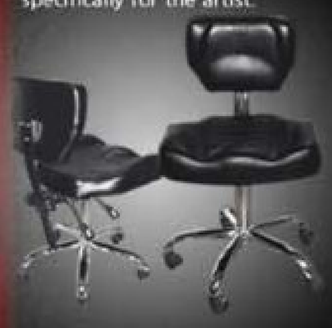


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Contents



GET ON A BUZZ! TATTOO JAM 2011 REVIEWED!

THE USUAL SUSPECTS

06 **SLEEVE NOTES**
Happenings and circumstantial evidence since the last issue.

08 **WALK THIS WAY**
Dave Fox and Jime Litwalk get their books put under the microscope.

10 **SMALLMAN SYNDROME**
Jim. Smallman. Doing his thing fresh from the Fringe.

12 **PICNIC AT HANGING ROCK**
In which a vehicle going quite fast meets a kangaroo. Also going quite fast.

98 **AN EYE IS UPON YOU**
Paula Hardy-Kangelos surveys the world as it turns.

ARTIST PROFILES

20 **NICK CHABOYA**
Quick-fire questions with one of San Francisco's finest.



IF YOU DON'T FALL IN LOVE WITH THIS LADY'S FINE, FINE WORK, THERE'S SOMETHING SERIOUSLY WRONG.

THIS MONTH'S SUPPLEMENT: 50 OF THE BEST ROCK TATTOOS



JENS AND EMIL EDGE DISCUSS THE LATEST IN ZOMBIE CURES...



WHO WATCHES THE WATCHMEN?
FOOD FOR THOUGHT INDEED...

STUDIO PROFILES

74 **THE DEVILS IN THE DETAILS**
Who can resist the whacky crew over at Cock A Snook? Not us. Quite possibly one of the most original studios in the UK.

82 **FROM VANCOUVER WITH LOVE**
The Runaways of the tattoo world? The all-girl crew at Liquid Amber like to walk it like they talk it.

SPECIAL FEATURES

36 **MAKE ART NOT WAR**
Alex Gross discusses his obsession with propaganda art and then mixes it up with some tattoo talk.

90 **A WORLD APART**
A behind the scenes look at the 6th Krakow Tattoofest.

COVER MODEL HOLLYWOOD HORROR
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AWAKE.ARISE STUDIO

It has been six years since JJ Jackson first picked up a machine and decided he was going to become a tattooist. After one false start, which included a degree in Graphic Design from Northumbria University, JJ finally got his career off the ground when Kerry-Anne Richardson (Cock A Snook) offered him her place at a shop she was leaving. Two years later and JJ had fine-tuned his skills in a busy street shop in Newcastle. It was then that he was offered the dream position of working out of John Anderton's Nemesis Studio in Durham. He was only to last a couple of weeks there before his Mum told him of a shop that had come up for lease near his family home in York. Phone calls and business meetings followed and in July 2011, Awake.Arise Tattoo Studio was born. Said JJ, "the name comes from a song from one of my favourite bands, A Wilhelm Scream, about every day routine."

JJ's new shop can be found at 269 Melrose Gate, York, YO10 3SN, just outside York's famous city walls.



Come in WE'RE OPEN

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The Business Tattoo and Piercing Studio is a new studio now open in Derby. Owner and Artist, Liam McCormack specialises in bespoke work with strong traditional influences. For serious tattoos by a serious artist and hygienic piercings by a fully trained, ethical piercer find us at 23A Shardlow Road, Alvaston, Derby. DE24 0JG. (opp. Blue Peter pub). Tattoos by Liam. Piercings by Jo.
07884 000943 or 07840 682577.
www.deviantart.com (search "lianjmc")
www.facebook.com/TheBusinessDerby.

SHORT SLEEVES

HELP FOR HEROES

Inkfusion Tattoo Studio Bracknell, Berkshire are holding a Help for Heroes fundraising event – they will be donating 50 per cent of their takings on Saturday 22 October and then holding a sponsored event on Sunday 23 October. For more details, give them a call: 07500 955 725 (Jay) or 07971 434 346 (Luke).

While we're talking about Help for Heroes, the ever present CupCake Club raised a smashing £1,130 at Tattoo Jam. Go girls!

CAMERA FOUND AT THE JAM!

During Tattoo Jam, a Finepix Digital S3500 camera was left at Mithra Tattoo's exhibition stand.

Obviously we would all like to see said camera reunited with its owner. If this – is you, what you need to do is call Mithra on 07976 587140 (ask for Bridgette) – where you'll be asked some verification questions and hopefully back in the saddle in time for Tattoo Freeze.

StoreYourBoard.com

StoredAge.com

SHORT SLEEVES

INK VS STEEL GUEST SPOTS

David Padley from Lucky 13 will be taking up residence at Ink Vs Steel on September 24, 25 and 26, and later in the year, Jaroslaw Baka from Rock Tattoo Poland will be guesting for two weeks from the November 19 to December 6. Stay tuned for details of the new premises – things are looking up!

ART AUCTION

Don't forget the results of the Tattoo Jam MasterClass – featuring the work of Jesse Smith, Jeff Gogue, Nikko Hurtado, Jason Butcher and Lianne Moule – are all still up for grabs in our charity auction at *tattoojam.com/entertainment/auction*.
This here is your shot to own an awesome piece of art and do some good in the process too!



NEW EVIL

Evil Needle in Alnwick, Northumberland, is set to double in size with the opening of its new studio in the historic northern market town. The new 300 square metres of studio can be found in the town right before the 13th century fortified gateway.

Peter Hall – owner and award winner – says, "the time is right to expand my business. I am taking on an apprentice and have scheduled a series of visiting tattoo artists to do special appearances at the studio." With clients now coming in from around the country, it looks like exciting times ahead and we wish them well in the new acreage!

Pass by, say hi: *www.evilneedle.com* – you can also call on 07708 164709.



PIMP YOUR STUDIO!

Those crazy horses at Graffiti Life have come up with a whacked out idea. What they want to do is come round to your studio and give it a full-on make-over to the tune of £2,000!

So, if your studio is looking a little tired or you just moved to new premises and think a 100 per cent custom job would be the order of the day, drop an email to *editor@skindeep.co.uk* with the subject line PIMP MY STUDIO (not forgetting to tell us your studio name and address) and we'll pluck one out of the hat. Entries need to be in by October 30 and is open to UK studios only.

The winner of the pimp will then get a spread or two in Skin Deep detailing the story and everybody will be happy! Bring it!



RANDOM READER

PHOTOGRAPH OF THE MONTH

This cool snap was taken by Dennis Tesch. Dennis is well into his tattoo photography and also shoots a lot of live bands. This particular shot is of Sascha B taken back in March in Ohlsdorfer graveyard in Hamburg. Nice work chief.
dennistesch.com.

ASK SCARY GUY!

Skin Deep has invited modern day philosopher and world traveller The Scary Guy to share his wisdom and knowledge with you! Scary is a good friend of Skin Deep and an expert in tattooing the hearts of minds of millions of people worldwide. We figured it would be very cool to give him a stage here to converse with readers directly.

Scary is an expert in determining the root causes of the emotional experiences that manifest themselves in the psyche and tells it like it really is. So let's get it on - that thing that's under your skin that's not ink, share it with Scary Guy and get it off your chest.
You can email Scary Guy your letters right now: *scaryguy@skindeep.co.uk* – names will be changed to protect the innocent, guilty and all those in between.

Conventions

All details correct at time of going to press.

September 10-11
COVENTRY INK TATTOO CONVENTION
AT7 Centre, Bell green,
Coventry, England
01604 949958

September 15-18
PARADISE TATTOO GATHERING
Jiminy Peak Mountain Resort,
37 Corey Road,
Hancock, MA 01237, USA
www.tattoogathering.com
gabe@tattoonow.com

September 23-25
THE LONDON TATTOO CONVENTION
Tobacco Dock, Porters Walk,
London, E1W 2SF
www.thelondontattooconvention.com

September 23-25
INKED OUT NEW JERSEY
Meadowlands Expo Center Secaucus, NJ, USA
(201) 342-4446, *info@inkedoutnj.com*
www.inkedoutnj.com

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(201) 342-4446
info@lasvegastattooshow.com
www.lasvegastattooshow.com

October 1-2
ST GALLEN TATTOO CONVENTION
Fürstenlandsaal, 9200 Gossau, Switzerland
www.tattoo-convention.sg.ch

October 9
1ST ANNUAL FEMALE TATTOO ARTIST SHOW
The Assembly, Spencer St, Leamington Spa, England. 50 of the UK's best female tattoo artists come together for the very 1st time.
www.facebook.com/pages/Uks-1st-Annual Female-Tattoo-Artist-Show/212251892134100
Tickets are on sale at *leamingtonassembly.com*

October 14-16
BRUSSELS TATTOO CONVENTION
Tours & Taxis, Brussels, Belgium
www.brusselstattooconvention.be

October 15-16
SZOLNOK TATTOO EXPO
Szolnok City, Tiszaliget Sport Center
Of University, Hungary
szolnoktattooexpo@gmail.com
www.szolnoktattooexpo.com

October 21-23
OTTAWA-GATINEAU TATTOO EXPO 3
Hilton "Casino" Lac Leamy, 3blvd du Casino,
Gatineau, QC, Canada
ottawatattooexpo@hotmail.ca
www.ottawatattooexpo.com

HEY, PRESTO!

Last month a couple of major art titles dropped on my desk from Presto Art Publishing. A Novel Idea? from Dave Fox and Sketchbook 4 from Jime Litwalk

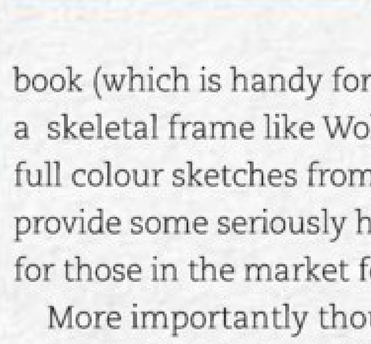
I never knew that Dave Fox had designs on being a writer once upon a time. I'm pretty certain that had he chosen to tread that path, he would have knocked them out of the ballpark. As fate would have it, he found himself able to tell his stories through art instead of words – and when it comes to the fantastic, nobody does it quite like Fox.

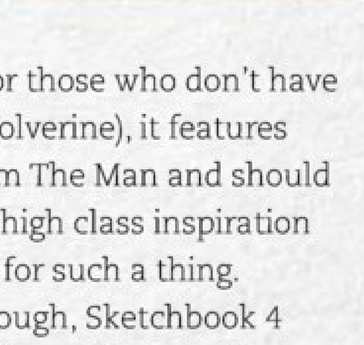
If there's something odd to add to an image to take it to another dimension, then that's what will happen – but he never crosses the line into an absurdity that's non-authentic. In fact, as he says himself "as complex and twisted as many of them might seem, most of my paintings are very matter-of-fact. I mean, why wouldn't I paint a panther-headed-shark-snake with eyeball wings? There're feelings and emotions I like to instill in the characters and sometimes even I have to laugh as I'm tweaking an expression because it reminds me of something really hilarious. For the most part though, I'm just trying my damnedest to make it look good."

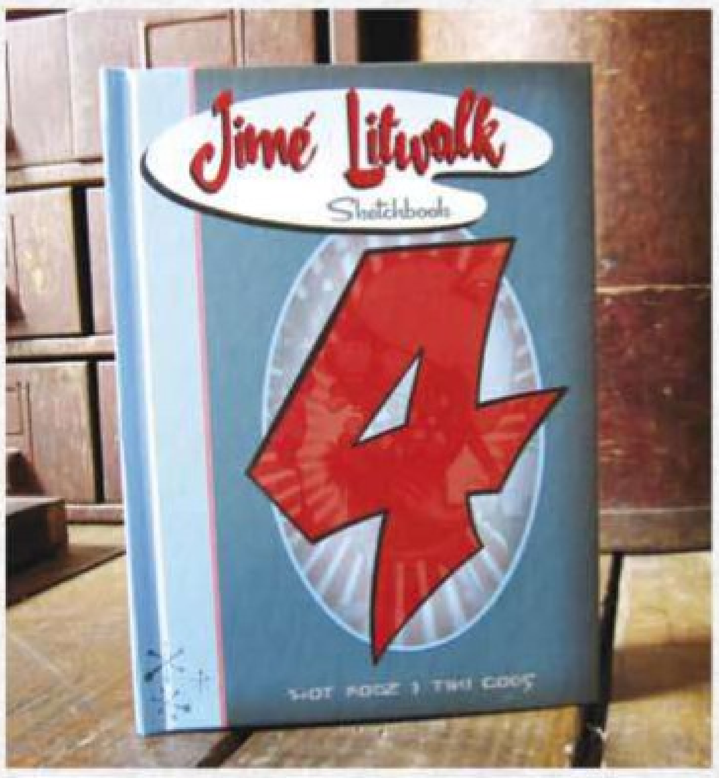
This massive volume of full colour avant-garde nightmares is a must for every coffee-table across the globe and is available to buy now straight from prestoart.com.

Meantime, Hot Rodz & Tiki Gods – sketchbook number 4 – from Jime Litwalk is equally exciting. In a smaller format than Fox's book (which is handy for those who don't have a skeletal frame like Wolverine), it features full colour sketches from The Man and should provide some seriously high class inspiration for those in the market for such a thing.









More importantly though, Sketchbook 4 cements Litwalk's position at the top of a tree that consistently pushes the benchmark for brilliance. Hot Rodz & Tiki Godz is also available now from prestoart.com.

Get a hold of them. Get a hold of both of them now. If you want to walk away with both of these fine, fine books for free though, drop me an email at *editor@skindeep.co.uk* with the subject PRESTO. Game on.

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October 29-30
HALLOWEEN TATTOO BASH
The Racecourse, Newton Abbot,
Devon, England
www.myspace.com/halloweentattoobash

November 12-13
EAST COAST TATTOO EXPO
Highfield Holiday Park, London Road, Clacton,
Essex, CO16 9QY, England
Info: Sudbury Ink, 01787 464946 or
Red's Tattoo Parlour, 01206 395262
eastcoastexpo@hotmail.co.uk
www.myspace.com/eastcoasttattooexpo

November 18-20
GOA TATTOO CONVENTION
Club West End, Saligao, Goa, India
www.tattoo-convention-indianink.com

2012
January 15
TATTOO FREEZE
Telford International Centre
www.tattoofreeze.com

January 28-29
BRIGHTON TATTOO CONVENTION
The Racecourse, Brighton, East Sussex, England
www.brightontattoo.com

February 25-26
INTERNATIONAL TATTOO & ART
Expo Claudelands Event Centre,
Hamilton, New Zealand
www.tattooart.co.nz

March 28 – 29
THE SCOTTISH TATTOO CONVENTION
The Corn Exchange, Edinburgh, Scotland
www.scottishtattooconvention.com

April 1
INK N IRON
The Tower, Birmingham
www.inkandiron.co.uk

April 14-15
2ND TATTOO EXTRAVAGANZA PORTSMOUTH
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Rivermead leisure complex
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June 23–24
SUMMER INK FEST
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SMALLMAN SYNDROME

So then, I'm back from Edinburgh after a month of telling people all about my tattoos. If you were one of the many Skin Deep readers that came along to see me then thank you very much – was lovely to have you come along and listen to my rantings

I managed to go through a whole month talking about tattoos and didn't get a single new one on myself. Doesn't mean I don't have a load of ideas though, and I also have to have one for losing a bet to my very good friend (and fellow tattooed comedian) Martin Mor. I've got to have his face tattooed on me somewhere, and as you can see it's a good job he's got an interesting beardy face. I do love Martin, he's like my comedy Uncle, so I'm more than happy to have him on me somewhere.

I'm also going to round out my Ron Burgundy tattoo with portraits of two of my other comedy heroes: Kenneth Williams from the Carry On films, and professional wrestler /author/crazed stuntman Mick "Mankind" Foley. Better still, in November, Mr Foley will be on these shores doing his first stand-up tour of the UK, and I'm supporting him – so I can hold my arm up to him to see the likeness.

Which brings me to my question of the month: Have you got a portrait of someone famous tattooed upon yourself and has the person in question ever seen it? There has to be a Skin Deep reader out there who has a photograph of their tattoo next to its famous subject. If you have send it in to me via the addresses below.

The last time we spoke I asked for yet more ridiculous tattoo designs for me. As always I received loads, but one in particular caught my eye. Mark Bassett – apprentice at No Regrets in Cheltenham – sent me in a brilliant take on the traditional panther tattoo. You can see a picture of it on this very page, and it had me laughing for ages. This of course leads to another question from me – have you got a twisted version of a traditional tattoo design? I may well get the panther on me at some point. I've nicknamed him Colin, for no real reason other than he looks like a Colin.

Finally, you may remember that I had my Edinburgh show title – Tattooligan – painfully tattooed onto my stomach. Whilst it hurt a lot, it has certainly been a useful publicity tool, with lots of people asking to see it and it getting me on TV and the radio. It has made me think though – do you reckon I could sell my body as advertising space? I've got lots of room left if you're interested, and I'm sure we could discuss decent rates...

Until next time, lovelies. Send me your pictures and emails, I do love hearing from you.



Email jim@skindeep.co.uk **Website** www.jimsmallman.com
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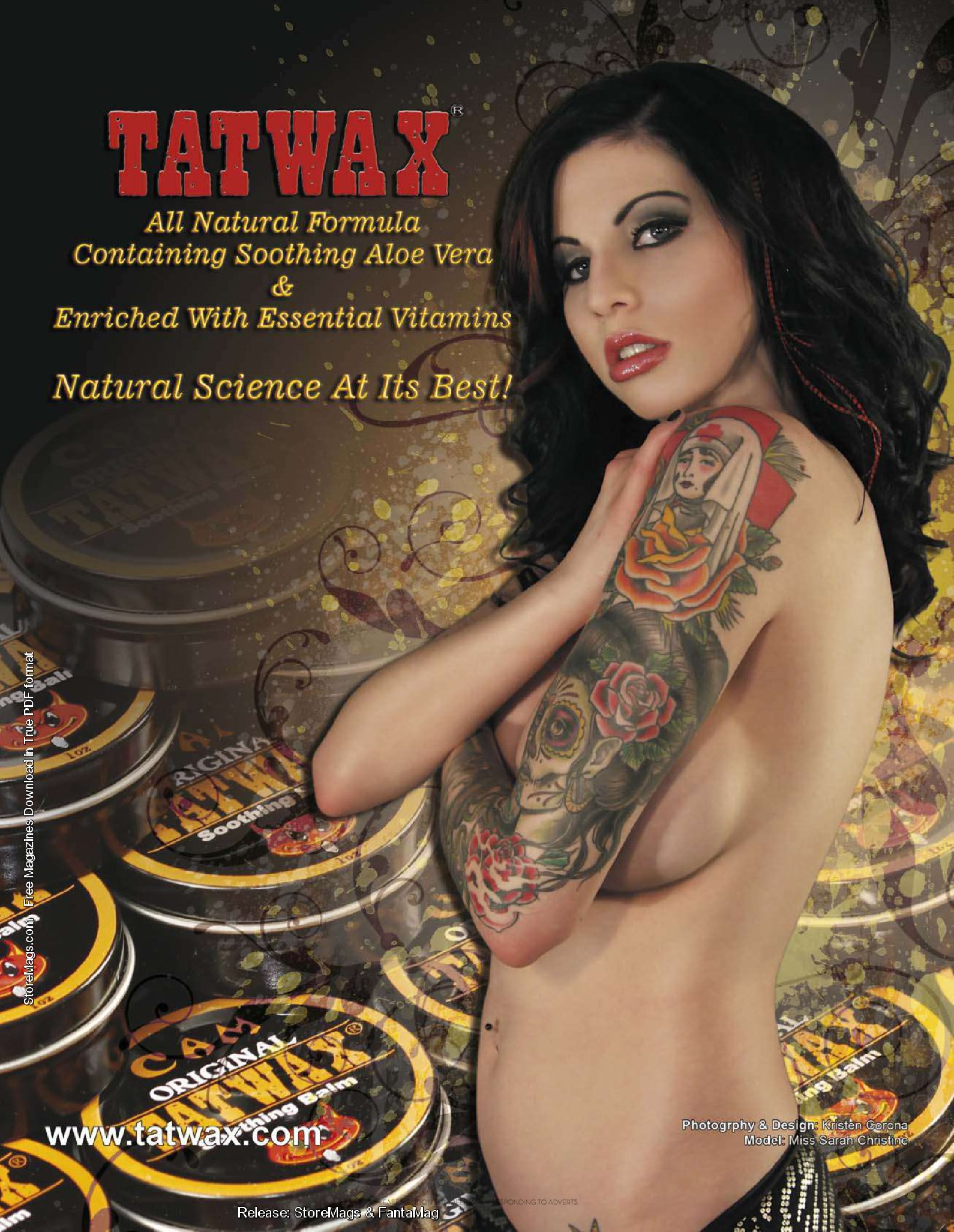
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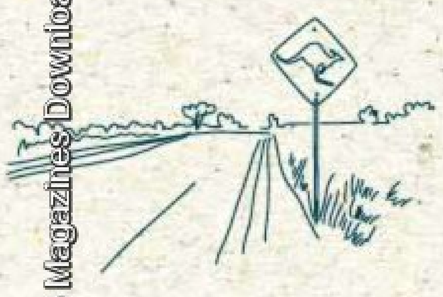
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PICNIC AT HANGING ROCK



After driving nearly 30,000km around Australia, the inevitable has finally happened we hit a kangaroo whilst driving at 7pm on a Friday night





Just popping out for some milk

After making it 2km to a roadhouse, which was shut, we slept in the car and got towed in the morning to a small town – if you can call 12 buildings a town – called Carmila, which isn't even on our map. Now Australia is a little laid back in times of crisis, which means nothing is open over the weekend-garage wise, so we have to spend two days here in the middle of nowhere before we can get towed to a 'big' town to get the car fixed. This place is just like a scene from Crocodile Dundee – the 'real' Australia. Dingos in the bush, kangaroos in the cane fields and crocodiles in the creeks.

The bar is pretty much a shed full of locals with ten teeth between them, who stop talking and watch us as we walk in, but as the old saying goes, looks can be deceiving and this is certainly the case, as once we get talking to them they are a great bunch and the beer is cold, so I guess there are far worse places to get stranded. This unwanted chain of events has unfortunately delayed our arrival in Cairns and there are no tattoo shops to check out here. Did I mention the town is only made up of 12 buildings didn't I? You really can't make this stuff up.

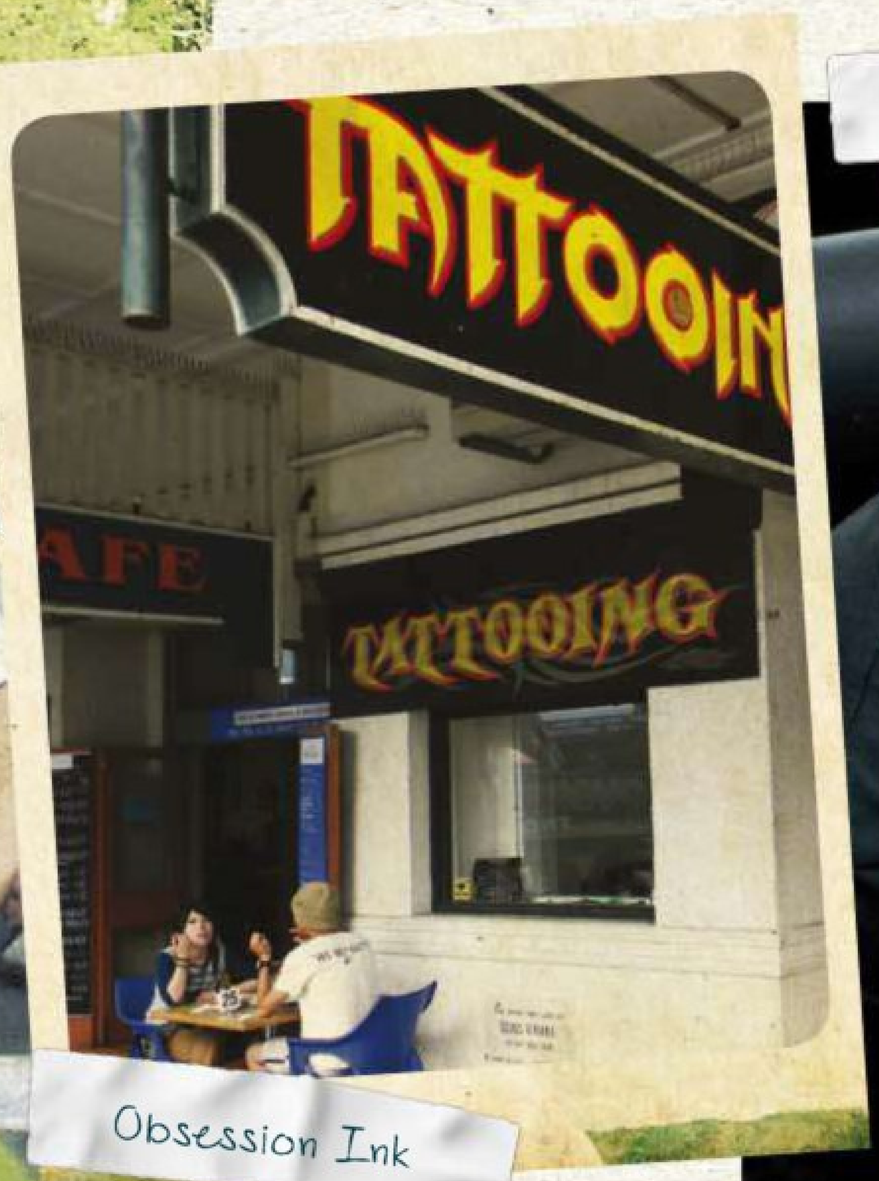
After a few days of isolation, we finally get on our way again and reach our destination. Cairns is a popular tourist destination as the Great Barrier Reef is on its doorstep. With this in mind, there are some ten tattoo shops in town, five or six of which are all on one street, preying on the tourists eager for a permanent memento of their trip of a lifetime.

Craigy Lee

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Obsession Ink



Matt Tattooing

You may also be wondering why there is no nice landscape photo of a city accompanying this month's article? Well Cairns is pretty flat and unimpressive, partially due to the amount of cyclones that hit the area, so you will have to make do with me grinning like a Muppet in the creeks and rainforests to get an idea of what the place is like.

I start my short stint of work at Obsession Ink. The shop originally opened in 2004, but current owner and artist Matt bought the business from his former boss last year. The shop is busy, with a lot of bookings as well as walk-ins. Bright, airy and open, the studio is nestled between cafes, bars and tour operators. Once I get my feet wet, I learn tourists sure are the bread and butter here, I don't think I tattooed a single person from Cairns during my stay. Terrance who is originally from Canada works alongside Matt and both the lads specialise in different styles - Terrance in old and new school and Matt in colour realism. Between appointments when I stand outside for a drink, you really get the feeling of a holiday town and I just can't get my head around how many studios that are a literal stones throw from my feet. "There is a lot of price competition between shops, clients go shop to shop and barter for the lowest price" Matt tells me, "but we stick to our quote and worry more about the quality of work going out the door." And he is right because quality is what brings people back, especially the locals which keep them going in the slow season.

I am only working a few days in the two weeks we have here – I'm supposed to be on holiday – so I try to get a feel for the place as quickly as possible and someone who has seen all the seasons pass over the years is veteran, Duane Cash, who has the oldest established shop in Cairns. Duane is a third generation tattoo artist, and he started young. He was just 13 years old when he first became interested in the craft and it took him a while to get into the industry. "Back then there was only one shop in every town. My dad used to tattoo but gave it up, so he sent me to see his uncle who was a tattoo artist." Frustratingly for Duane, his dad's uncle had got rid of all his tattoo equipment and sold up two days before he arrived. Finally at the age of 15, Dennis Star gave him a chance: "I walked into his shop and there was a picture of my uncle on the wall. When I told him that was my Uncle George, he gave me a chance." Duane finally started up his own place at the age of 17 and has been tattooing ever since.

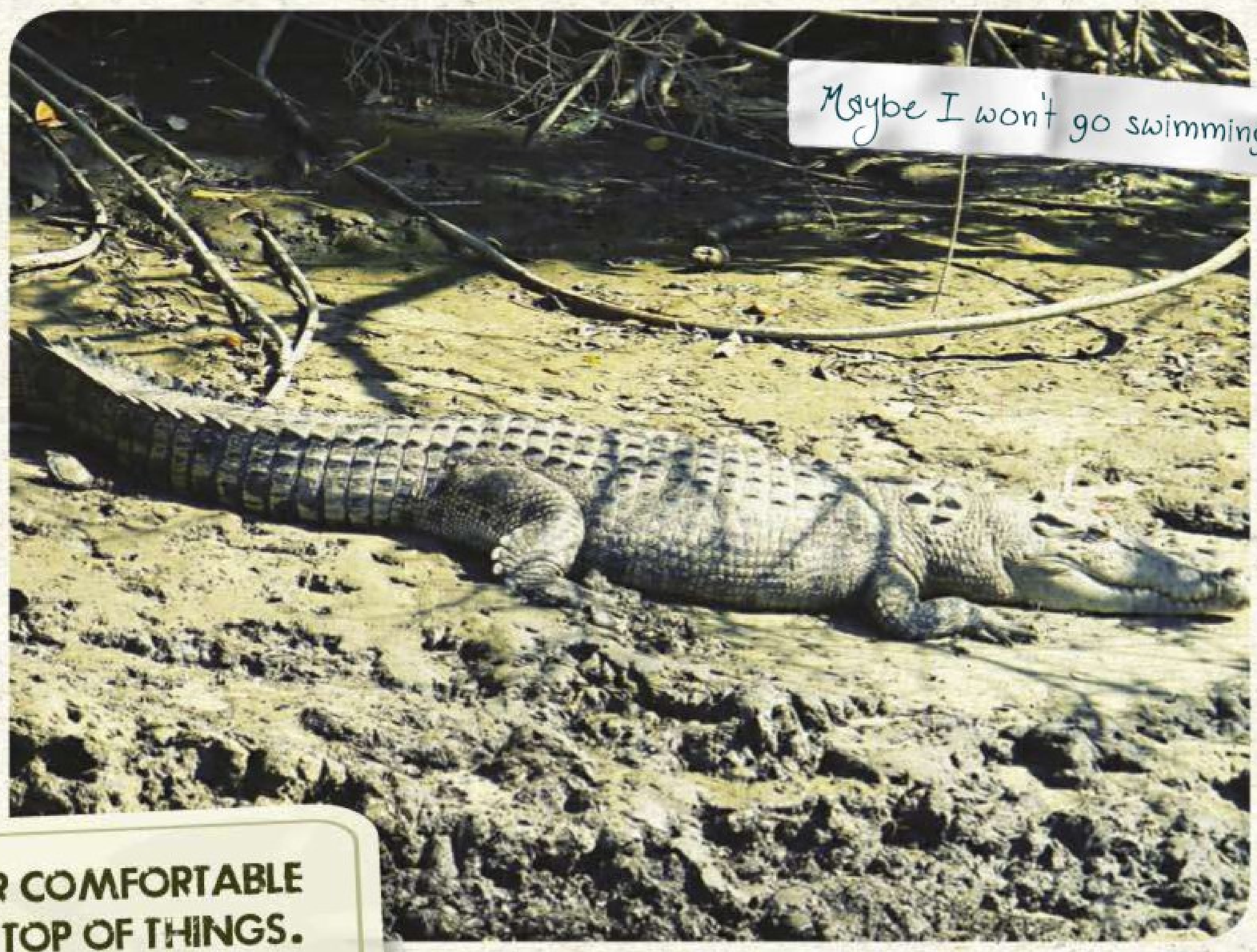
Cairns City Tattoo opened its doors back in 1985 – it was the only studio in town for eighteen years and has of course noticed the recent popularity tattooing has gained. Obviously being in the town that long, the shop has a great reputation making them extremely busy. And while Duane has lots of large scale Japanese pieces on

BETWEEN APPOINTMENTS WHEN I STAND OUTSIDE FOR A DRINK, YOU REALLY GET THE FEELING OF A HOLIDAY TOWN AND I JUST CAN'T GET MY HEAD AROUND HOW MANY STUDIOS THAT ARE A LITERAL STONES THROW FROM MY FEET



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the go, he still keeps every Saturday free for walk-in appointments. "It keeps me fresh and I like the fact that you don't know what you're going to do next" he explains.

I admire that kind of attitude. When you know he is an artist that has been in the game a long time, it would be easy for him to rest on his laurels and only book work he wants or likes doing, but he doesn't. He understands where it all came from and respects the walk-in service part of tattooing. "Not getting too stale or comfortable is the key to staying on top of things. There are a lot of great young artists emerging at the moment, doing great work, perfecting and pushing things forward". Duane has six full-time artists working alongside him many of who have been with him for over ten years. The shop covers every style you could want, as well as now offering laser removal.

NOT GETTING TOO STALE OR COMFORTABLE IS THE KEY TO STAYING ON TOP OF THINGS. THERE ARE A LOT OF GREAT YOUNG ARTISTS EMERGING AT THE MOMENT, DOING GREAT WORK, PERFECTING AND PUSHING THINGS FORWARD DUANE CASH

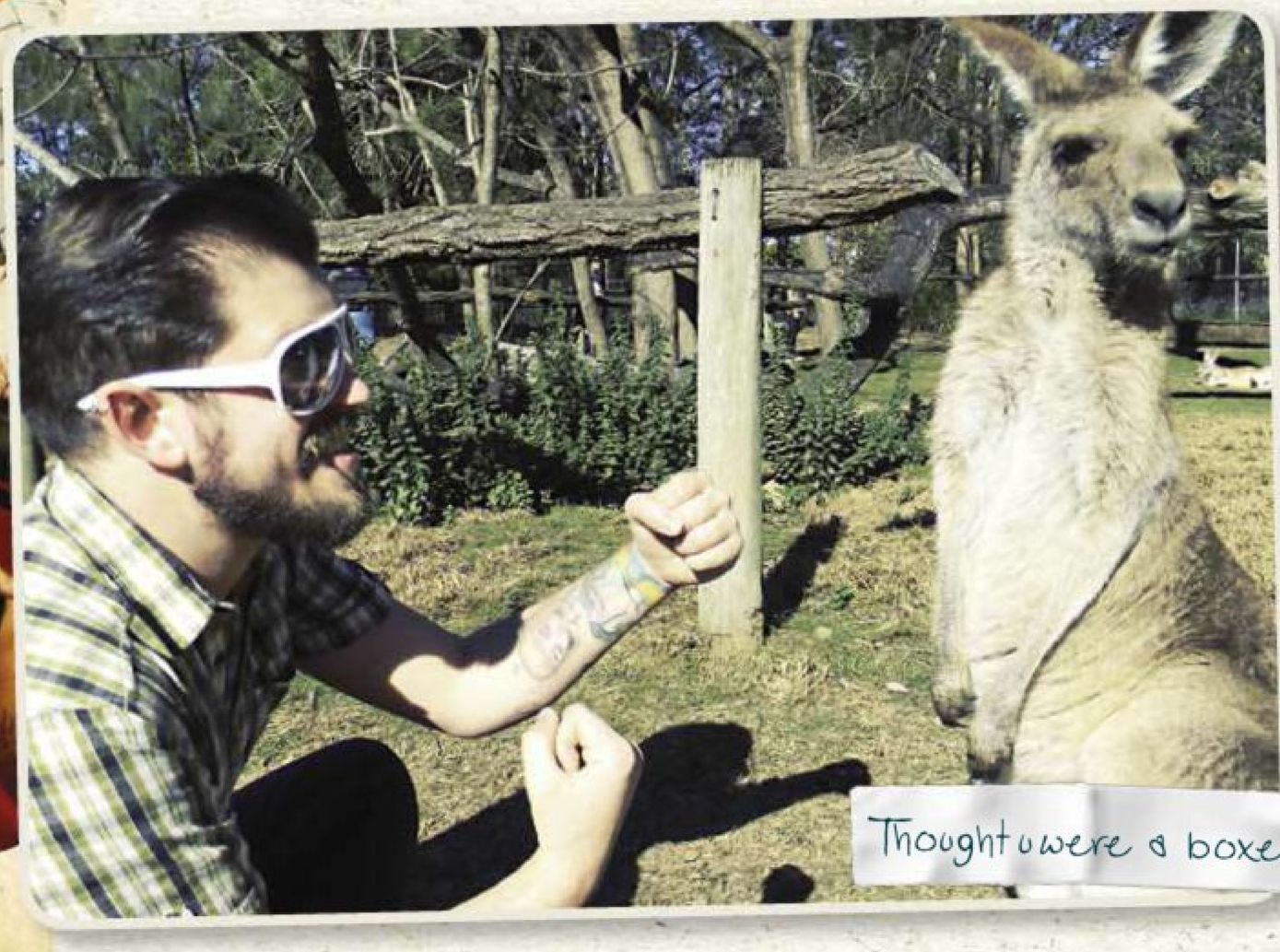


Me with Duane Cash

Due to tattoo TV shows and the general popularity tattooing has gained recently, a lot of kids are getting their necks or hands done as a first tattoo: "That's where the laser is good, people make bad decisions, but it also helps me when we do cover up work to give customers more options" – and options are always a good thing because at the end of the day, tattooing is a service and will always be a customer led business.



Duane Cash's Cairns City Tattoo



Thought u were a boxer

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the traveller

What drives 23-year-old Jens Svensson to repeatedly make the 400-mile round trip to get tattooed by the same artist? Emil Edge is a big part of the reason, but there's more...



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Sweden

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Jens

Where did it all start? I guess it all began with my love of motocross and all kinds of extreme sports. I used to watch a lot of these kinds of movies and documentaries, and this is where I really got into tattoos.

For my first tattoo, I went to a real amateur who did a star with a skull inside it – and it was really crap! A friend told me he knew of a really good artist, so we went around to visit him and he fixed it up. After that it looked all right. The same tattooist also did my next tattoo on my upper arm. It was supposed to be a flower, which I don't know the name of and it was almost impossible to see that it was a flower! For the next six months, wherever I went, I always wore a hoodie so no one could see the crap work on my arm!

I started to search for someone good and I couldn't find anyone I really felt a connection with. I decided to have another look around, this time with my friend Marcus. Marcus showed me the studio where he got all his tattoos, South of Heaven, which is located in Västerås.

It was at this studio that I first met Emil Edge (who was working at South of Heaven before he moved over to Fisheye Ink with Jimmy Lanjen) and saw his portfolio which blew me away immediately. I had never seen anything like his art before and I fell in love with it instantly.

After meeting Emil, I sent him an email, asking him if he could fix up my arm. I told him he could do whatever he wanted, as long as I didn't have to look at the old shit ever again.

My first trip to Emil ended up with me getting a shaved arm and that was it! The problem was, he didn't think the drawing he had done in preparation, would work as a cover-up. It was at this point that I knew I could trust Emil completely; he had proved that he wasn't just thinking about earning some money. He wanted to do a really nice tattoo.

A while later, I saw the drawing that Emil had done for me and I was super pumped to get it done. In my last session, about three hours before I was due to arrive, I asked him if there was enough time to do my ankle. I asked him to draw up a disgusting bird and he came up with something that was just the way I pictured it in my head. After those two experiences, and with the end results, I knew I would be stupid to look for another artist. I had found the perfect one for me!

For my ribs, I gave Emil the freedom to do whatever he wanted. The only thing I requested was that it be something funny. That is how I ended up with a zombified man with a flower pot on his head and the lucky bastard found out that the smell of the flowers was the cure that would turn



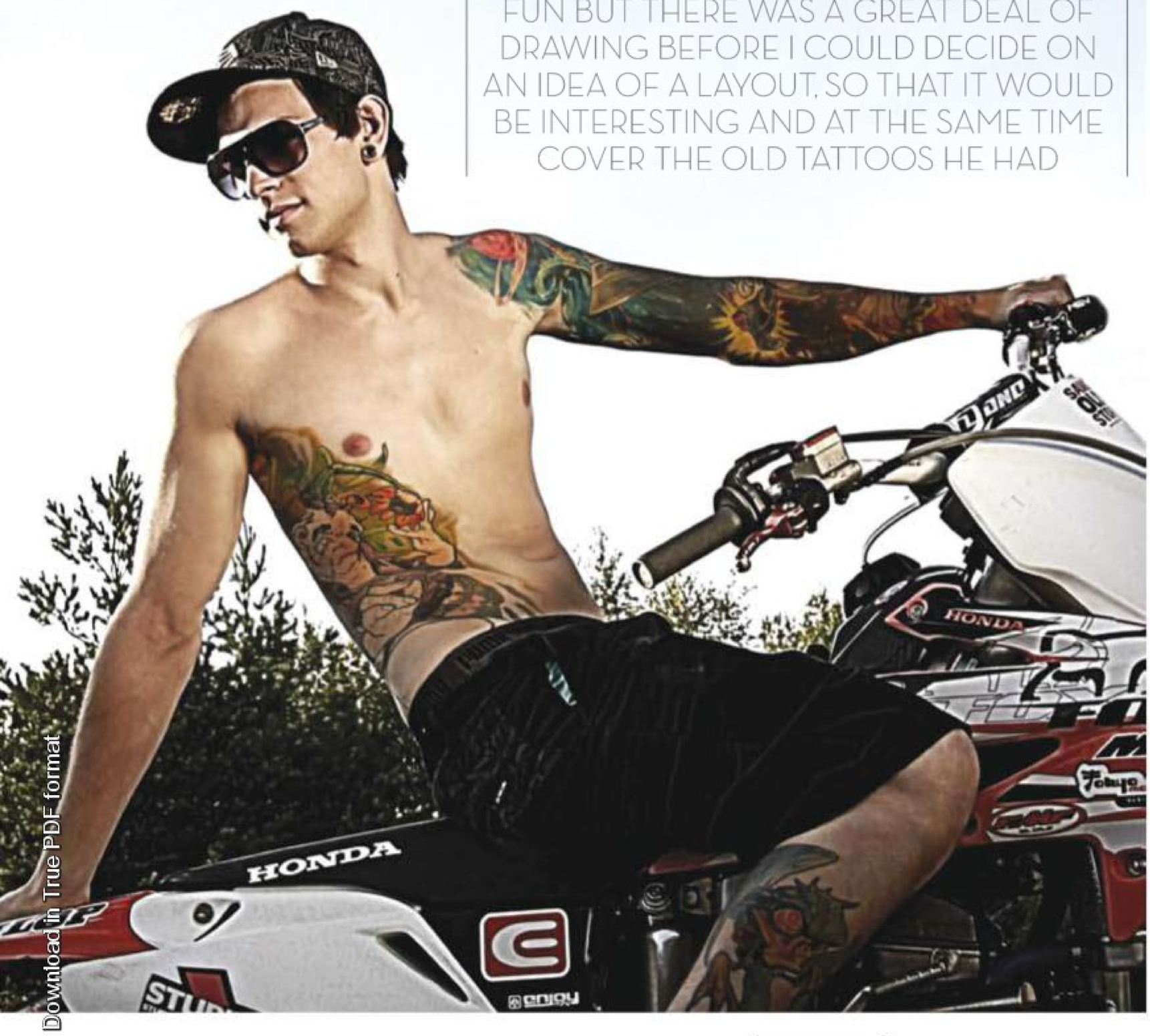
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AFTER MEETING EMIL, I SENT HIM AN E-MAIL, ASKING HIM IF HE COULD FIX UP MY ARM. I TOLD HIM HE COULD DO WHATEVER HE WANTED, AS LONG AS I DIDN'T HAVE TO LOOK AT THE OLD SHIT EVER AGAIN





IT WAS A TROUBLESOME SLEEVE. SUPER FUN BUT THERE WAS A GREAT DEAL OF DRAWING BEFORE I COULD DECIDE ON AN IDEA OF A LAYOUT, SO THAT IT WOULD BE INTERESTING AND AT THE SAME TIME COVER THE OLD TATTOOS HE HAD





him back into a human again. So far I have had about ten sessions with Emil, running in at about 47 hours and I still have about six hours left on my ribs. We are also planning a design for my other arm – we have talked about a diver in the ocean for the arm, but we haven't reached a decision yet – and maybe later a chest piece.

What I like most about Emil's work, is the way that he twists all of your ideas and makes them a hundred times better then you could ever have thought. His style is also very unique in Sweden, I have never seen anyone in my town with the same tattoos. I love this as I know I will always be sure that my tattoos aren't a copy of someone else's work!

Emil Edge

We started with his triple cover-up sleeve and had a bunch of ideas before settling with this one – a mutated alien, escaping earth and being killed by these other spacemen who were trying to contain the infection on our planet. It was a troublesome sleeve. Super fun but there was a great deal of drawing before I could decide on an idea of a layout so that it would be interesting, and at the same time cover the old tattoos he had.

Later we did the infected bird as a one-shot piece once we had finished the sleeve. We had a few hours left on that day, so Jens asked me if I wanted to do one more tattoo and this is what came out.

Right now we are working on his ribs – an infected human being is cured after getting hit with a flowerpot on the head. This is one of the first cures recorded in zombie history. They had noticed some creatures had been cured before, but no one really had an idea of how this happened. This is the big break-through… provided anyone survives and is able to tell the scientists. I've been tattooing Jens for a while now and he is a super nice guy and always a laugh to have at the shop. Definitely the model client, always up for fun ideas and willing to leave a lot of the decisions up to me. I hope he will continue getting tattooed by me – I feel like we got a couple more nice stories to tell.

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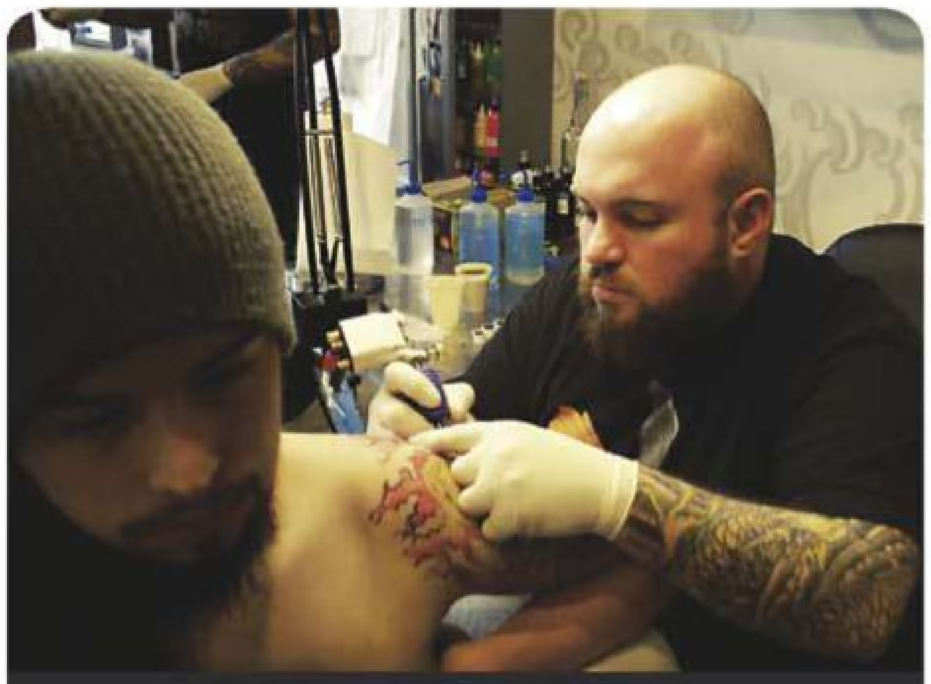
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NICK CHABOYA

He was about to become an art teacher when when he realised the travel potential of being a tattoo artist. Today Nick Chaboya works in one of San Francisco's most respectable studios, Seventh Son Tattoo but he hasn't closed the door on teaching just yet.

AS A KID I HEAR YOU KNEW YOU DIDN'T WANT TO WORK 9-5 AND WANTED TO TRAVEL AND SEE THE WORLD. HOW DID YOU COME TO REALISE WHAT YOU NEEDED TO DO TO GET ALONG IN THE WORLD?

"I had some friends in high school that got tattooed, so I got introduced that way and I saw the opportunity to travel and do art at the same time, he says. While I studied at an art college I felt that I didn't want to become a teacher just yet. If you paint you sit in your own studio, by yourself and there's no unity among the artists. I saw the tight community of tattooists. Once you get tattooed you can't hide it. It's a unifying mark. Also a lot of the teachers I had never had time for their personal art. What they did in class was their expression of art. I had some great teachers but their personal art always came second to teaching."

"I was living in San José, going to school in Oakland and San Francisco depending on where the class was and working full time at Metamorphic Tattoo. For two years I got like three, four hours sleep per night, and I had roommates. Sometimes I'd come home and step over passed out bodies on my way to the bedroom. I was always the guy who went to bed a little earlier."

SOUNDS TO US LIKE YOUR LIFE HASN'T CHANGED MUCH AT ALL.

"It's still the same, although now I work six days a week and on the seventh I do emailing and stuff. I also have an art studio across the street, so like this morning I went there to paint for a while. Now I'm tattooing this guy and after that I'll probably go back and paint some more."



Simon Lundh

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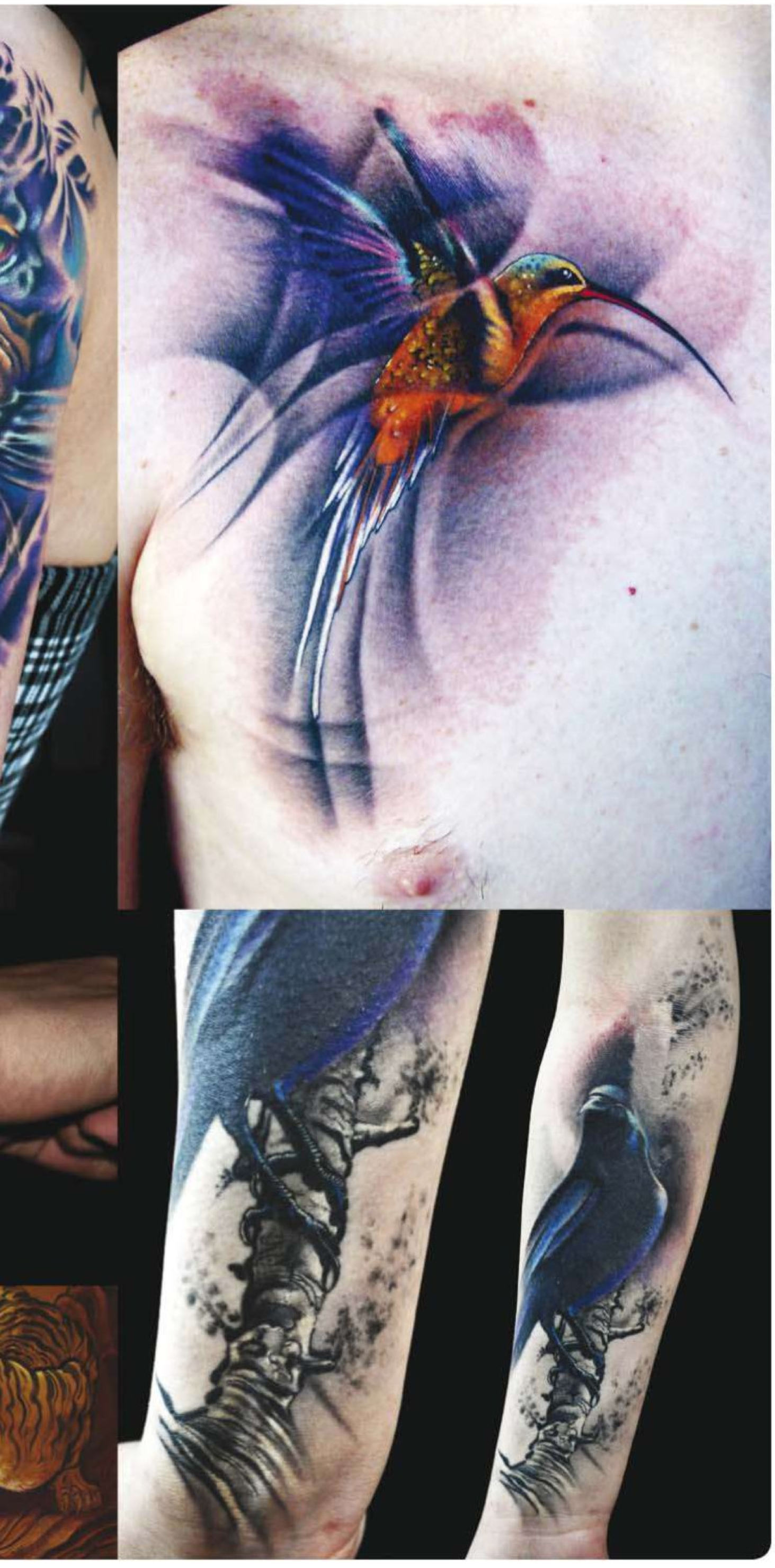








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AFTER CONCENTRATING FULLY ON TATTOOING SINCE YOU STARTED, YOU SEEM TO HAVE PICKED UP YOUR OLD PURSUIT IN THE FINE ARTS.

"I started like a year or a year and a half ago. I did like 30 art shows before I started tattooing and now I've got a couple coming up. I don't see it as a potential side income. Painting is my thing. It's not representative of my tattooing. As a painter I don't like to do commission. The commission I like is someone saying that they want to buy the next thing I do. I don't want to take the fun out of it. I'm doing what I've been doing all my life. I just try to make it read into tattoos and make sure it ages well."

A LOT OF THE TEACHERS I HAD NEVER HAD TIME FOR THEIR PERSONAL ART. WHAT THEY DID IN CLASS WAS THEIR EXPRESSION OF ART.

YOU'RE CURRENTLY A WEEK AWAY FROM GOING OVER TO DENMARK AND GERMANY - DOES THE TRAVELLING SUIT YOU WELL?

"I do quite a bit of travelling but you always want to do more. I've done shows in Australia, Canada, Europe and all over the US, although I don't do the American ones so much anymore. They've become predictable and don't have the same appeal. I like meeting clients in other countries, to see what they want. Also I love food and to experience new things."

SO, WHAT'S THE STRANGEST THING YOU'VE EATEN?

"Lamb brains in Australia. Not my thing. For them it's not strange and the taste was ok, but the texture was not what I'm into. I love Thai food in Thailand, pizza in Italy and so on. Another thing with travelling as a tattooist is that you sit down with your client and they'll tell you to go to this or this restaurant or bar. You might just be there for a week but you get into the place really quickly."

YOU PREFER NEW CONVENTIONS TO THE ESTABLISHED BUT ARE THERE ANY YOU'RE PARTICULARLY FOND OF?

"The one in Calgary in Canada is awesome for us tattoo artists. The organiser puts everything in consideration and you have to show up with the minimum amount of stuff. Then you have conventions like Barcelona, London and Milan. The amount of people who come, they're like the Wrestlemania of conventions, or the Super Bowl."

TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT WORKING AT SEVENTH SON

"Look around, right now there are eight of us tattooing at the same time in this beautiful, light studio with these open spaces, and everyone's got their own style, their own strong points. There's no way you can be in this environment and not be influenced by the others. You'd have to have your head so far up your ass not to."

IS TEACHING WELL AND TRULY OFF THE CARDS?

"I'm doing some seminars at conventions now and from time to time it's pretty cool, but it's a huge responsibility to teach and I don't think I'm there yet. I'm on my way but I don't think I know enough yet. And if I never teach, that's cool too."

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WHO WATCHES THE WATCHMEN?

It's a Friday night and you've decided to head out for dinner with some friends. None of you are quite certain of exactly what you're in the mood for, so you decide to peruse the menus of various locations along a popular strip of restaurants.

Mike Jones as credited

After considering numerous places for a bite, you and your friends finally agree on one restaurant in particular. The atmosphere is just right, the menu looks fabulous, but just as you're about to order, you learn that health officials have not inspected the restaurant and that the chef has not taken so much as a food safety course. The chef personally assures you that this isn't a problem and that despite not being legally certified to prepare or serve food, he most certainly follows all of the strictest health and safety regulations anyway. Are you willing to stay and eat, or would you rather try somewhere else – somewhere that has been approved and licensed by proper health authorities?

For many, tattoo regulation is no different. The ability to legally ensure that the tattooist one has chosen is safe, follows hygienic practices and is approved by a governing health body, seems to be advantageous for two reasons. On one hand, the customer is afforded the comfort of knowing that their tattooist can and will provide the cleanest and safest tattoo that they can, while the tattooist, by extension of the licence and thumbs

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up from governing health bodies that he or she has been given, receives a much needed vote of confidence from their community. In a way, a licensed and regulated tattooist rightly takes their place as a serious artist in the eyes of society. There's an arguable notion here that no artist needs to be validated by any government or wing of the governing body, and that what tattooists do has always been

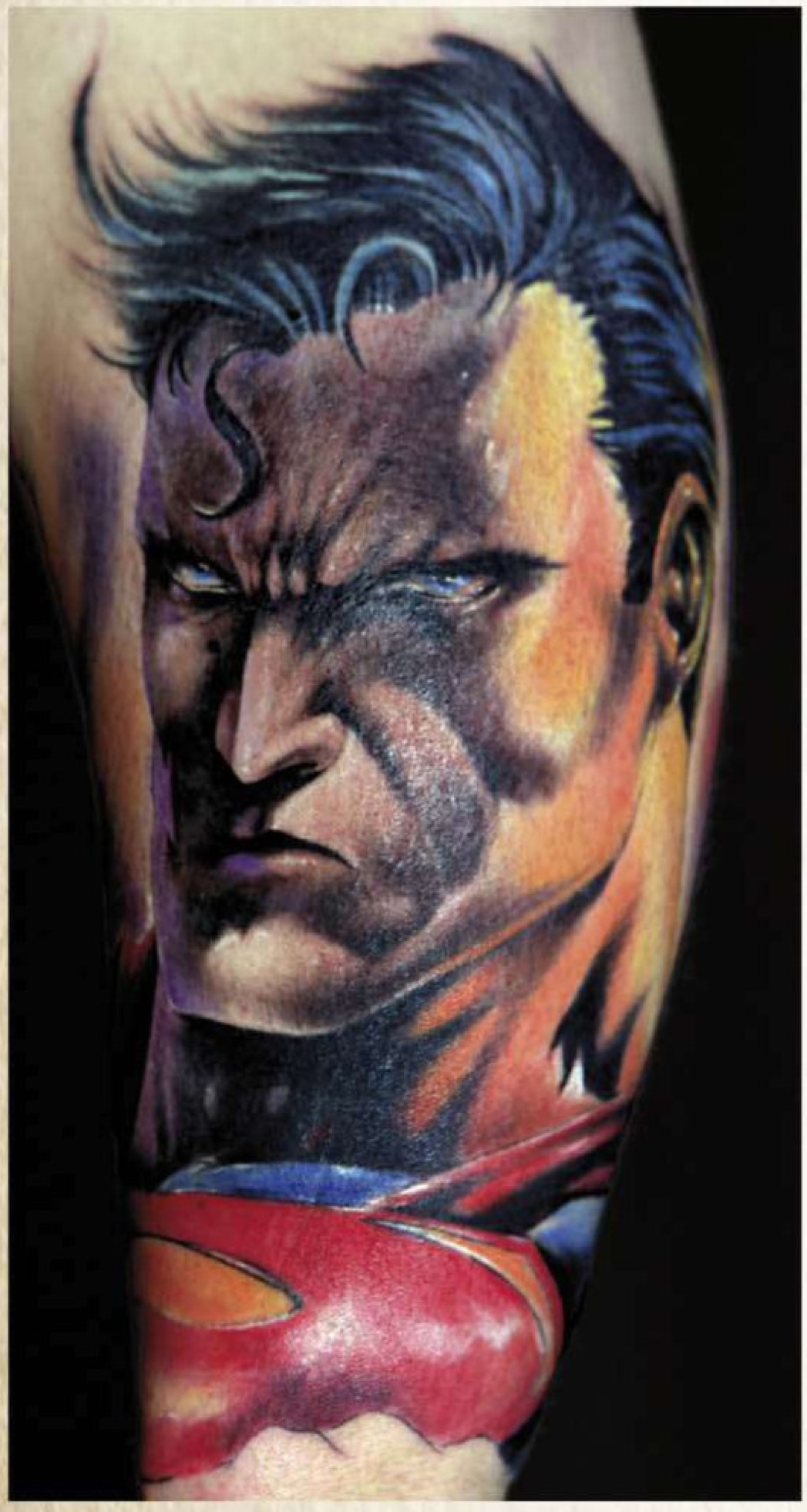
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something of an outlaw art form that plays by its own rules, rightly giving two fingers to the archaic constraints imposed by government or society in general.

But that notion can be interpreted as slightly selfish, in that it only takes into account the feelings and habits of the tattooist himself

TATTOOING CAN'T SIMPLY BE AN ISOLATED PURSUIT AND BECAUSE OF THIS, THE ISSUE EXISTS TO DEFINE WHO CAN LEGALLY BE CALLED A TATTOOIST AND EXACTLY HOW QUALIFIED SUCH A PERSON IS TO PROVIDE THEIR CLIENTELE WITH THE BEST TATTOO POSSIBLE



and not the public that he or she works with. A chef, for example, takes the culinary arts just as seriously as a great tattooist takes his or her work. Both have studied their respective art forms and continually grow as artists. Yet a great chef, despite being fully aware of what is and isn't hygienic for his customers, must be licensed to do the job that he does, and his kitchen must pass rather stringent and rigorous inspections by local factions of the health department. This is done to protect the public, but also for the chef himself, as any great artist – be they of the culinary arts or otherwise must be able to appreciate that without the trust and respect of their clientele, they have no one to offer their impressive and well honed artistic skills to. Does this therefore imply that a tattooist's skills are only valid if he or she can sell them to a consumer? Hardly.

Tattooists follow a lengthy history of artisans who came before them. From these artisans there have been bits and pieces of advice, and in many cases guidance, toward performing and maintaining aspects of the tattoo tradition. Tattooists don't require regulation to validate their art form, but regulation does validate the business side of tattooing. As unpleasant as it may be of a pill for some to swallow, modern tattoo is an art form as well as a business. Without a public who can trust that they will receive the best body art that their hard earned wages can provide, there is only the art form. That's just fine, yet the amount of professional tattooists who tattoo strictly for the artistic pursuit, without requiring any sort of monetary gain in return for their efforts, is non-existent in modern society. Therefore, perhaps the most difficult and downright delicate aspect of being a professional tattooist in these times is not entirely about the ability to tattoo and how that craft is learned and honed, but instead how one goes about handling the delicate balancing act between what's best for the artist, the art form in general, and the clientele. Tattooing can't simply be an isolated pursuit and because of this, the issue exists to define who can legally be called a tattooist and exactly how qualified such a person is to provide their clientele with the best tattoo possible. That's where regulation comes in.

Though on paper regulation is a somewhat or perhaps seemingly perfect solution to the problems that have often marred tattoo's image, the question that continues to rear its head, is whether or not proper licensing of tattooists and strictly enforced regulation actually does anything to prevent the existence of scratchers and DIY wannabe tattooists. The sad fact is that regulation does not entirely stamp out such problems.

In 2005, 15-year-old Julie Thomas of Sussex received a 13cm tattoo of Winnie the Pooh on her arm, with the words 'Grandpa H' emblazoned above the cartoon bear, in remembrance of her deceased grandfather. The UK law on tattoo clearly states that no one under the age of 18 is permitted to be tattooed, and although strict licensing and regulation were in place during the time that Thomas received her tattoo, none of this actually prevented her from being tattooed by someone who freely admitted that they weren't a licensed tattooist and that they only did tattoos as a "hobby". With an incident like this so open to all who support regulation and licensing as a means to curb/stamp out DIY tattoo, the question must be asked: if regulation can't prevent a 15-year-old girl from being tattooed by an unlicensed scratcher, then exactly what sort of peace of mind are tattooists paying into when they make the necessary changes to their working environment in order to comply with government regulations?

It's exactly that type of question that leads some tattooists to cry foul on the entire issue of government regulation, arguing that any attempt on the part of government to install regulations is in fact, little more than a cash grab that will only serve to destroy the current tattoo

industry. London-based tattooist Stewart Robson of Frith Street Tattoo contends, "The people who make legislation know nothing about tattooing and what makes it safe or unsafe. They check that you own equipment and not that you understand cross-contamination. The 'tattoo artists' who work with the government don't care about the future of tattooing. They are usually terrible tattooers who know that the only way they can stay in business is to adjust the rules to make it more difficult for more established tattooers to follow the guidelines they instigated. They care about running their competition out of business, not the well-being of their customers or the future of tattooing."

Strong words indeed, but perhaps they're words that need to be heard and considered. Is a level playing field rendering the years of sacrifice and hard work of so many tattooists meaningless? It's a somewhat controversial accusation; given the fact that even with current levels of regulation, amazing tattooists continue to thrive and create art that is highly in demand. Still, other tattooists echo Robson's concerns, even all the way across the Atlantic. Washington, D.C., which currently has no tattoo regulation in place, is quietly considering going the route of legislation. Tattooists Mark Knopp, owner and operator of Tattoo Paradise feels that governments and tattoo don't mix. In an article on the website Dcist, Knopp contended that the boards responsible for inspecting and licensing tattooists and their studios are unknowledgeable about tattoo and that, "it's another way for the government to make money off people. It's a way to put their hands in another till." The issue here is that tattooists like Robson and Knopp are not interested in taking part in anything that is regulated by the government because they wish to maintain part of a thriving outsider industry. By such standards, it makes sense to feel that any government involvement within their craft would corrupt the world in which they thrive. Maybe everything just works best when everyone sticks to what they know.

This would seem to be the best solution if only it weren't for one major issue: the governing bodies take it upon themselves to do what they feel is best. In a private context this is perhaps more avoidable and manageable, but when working with the public it is far more difficult of an issue. If the government truly wants to regulate tattoo and even if this is completely a ploy for financial gain, then it is unavoidable, just as taxes are unavoidable. At the same time, however, criticism of regulation does demand an answer to issues that might not be explored were there no opposition whatsoever to begin with. It also creates room in which tattooists might take the time to actively explore their own roles in the entire process of government licensing and regulation over tattoo.

Hawaiian tattooist Tricia Allen knows all about exploring such roles. Allen, who received her master's degree in Anthropology from the University of Hawai'i at Manoa in 1992 and who wrote her master's thesis on the early practice of tattooing in the Marquesas islands, has tattooed over 8,000 members of the Polynesian community. On July 1, 2009, Hawaii introduced new tattoo regulations, which Allen worked to amend, writing a bill and a companion bill that was sent to the United States Senate. Her efforts brought her into close contact with the state of Hawaii's Department of Health, creating a strong relationship in which the DOH was willing to take into consideration the thoughts of the Hawaiian tattoo community on the issues that ultimately affected them and their work. Through phone surveys aimed specifically at Hawaiian tattooists as well as direct communication with the tattooists she knew, Allen helped to create one of the first instances in the United States where tattooists worked alongside the Department of Health to build and better structure tattoo regulations. Her success with this issue provided an understandable source of pride over proving that tattooists and their relevant governing bodies could work together to make changes that benefit the government, the tattooists themselves and the tattooist's prospective clients.

Such an example of a tattooist working alongside health authorities might seem like a daunting step toward altering the disagreeable aspects of the current


Jaroslaw Baka

IS A LEVEL PLAYING FIELD RENDERING THE YEARS OF SACRIFICE AND HARD WORK OF SO MANY TATTOOISTS MEANINGLESS?

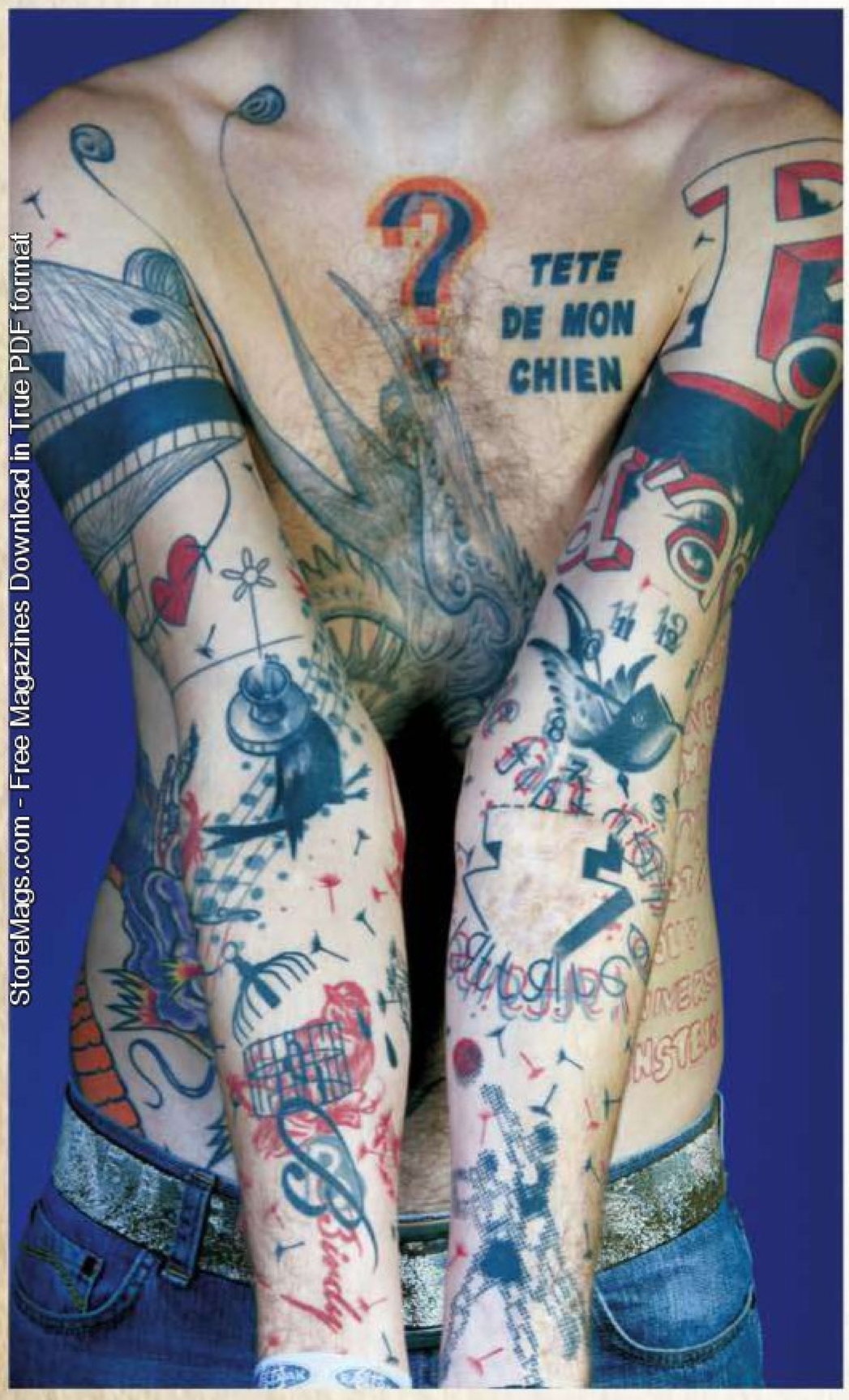
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state of tattoo regulation, but it's only through a collectively raised effort that anything can change, just as it's only through a collectively raised effort that tattooists can hold on to and better control what is rightfully their craft/art form.

Yet despite the best intentions of dedicated tattooists like Tricia Allen, it's a mistake to assume that government sanctioned licensing and regulation of tattooists is somehow providing a utopian solution to the problems that can all too often occur in the name of tattoo. The rate at which unlicensed and untrained scratchers are

IF THE ISSUE IS PUT INTO PLAIN BLACK AND WHITE TERMS, THE QUESTION THAT ULTIMATELY NEEDS TO BE ASKED IS WHETHER OR NOT TATTOO REGULATION IS MAKING ANY DIFFERENCE AT ALL.



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illegally tattooing underage clients is growing as a result of readily available and very cheap tattoo kits from the internet. Tattoo parties, in which groups of underage people get together in a home and are tattooed by a scratcher are becoming increasingly popular in the United Kingdom. In August of 2011, three illegal tattooists were arrested in Edinburgh and charged for tattooing minors. This incident only serves to further stoke the fires of a trend that continues to grow in Edinburgh. In 2007, there were only two incidents of scratchers being charged under the Tattooing of Minors Act 1969, and in 2008-9, there were only a total of three. In 2009-10, these numbers continued to rise, but marginally so, evidenced by the six illegal tattooing infractions of that time period. But as of 2011, there have been 16 cases already and that number looks set to grow. Where does regulation enter into this respect?

At a stage where underage tattoo grows and online sales of sketchy tattoo equipment seemingly booms, the question needs to be asked as to whether or not the battle of underage tattoo and easily procured equipment for scratchers is a battle that governments must face and account for on their own. This is not something that tattooists can or should have to work on preventing, though it certainly must be tackled head on. The real problem begins (and is currently happening), when the issue of DIY tattoo equipment sold on the internet or the issue of tattoo parties are shoved into the realm of regulated tattooists by the powers that be, as though those issues were one and the same as professional tattooists being licensed and regulated. As Edinburgh's environment leader, Councillor Robert Aldridge said after the most recent arrests of three illegal tattooists: "The council views the tattooing of under-18s as a very serious matter and it is made clear to licensed operators that they could face having their licence revoked if found guilty of such an offence." Yet no mention was made of the issue that is far greater and which continually seems to be ignored: the ease with which DIY tattoo kits are currently procured. If issues such as these are continually shoved into the realm of tattoo regulation, then the task of making a distinction between government's responsibility and tattoo's responsibility becomes progressively cloudier in the eyes of those in power. The solution to this, it would seem, is for tattooists to take back what is theirs and make that distinction prominent.

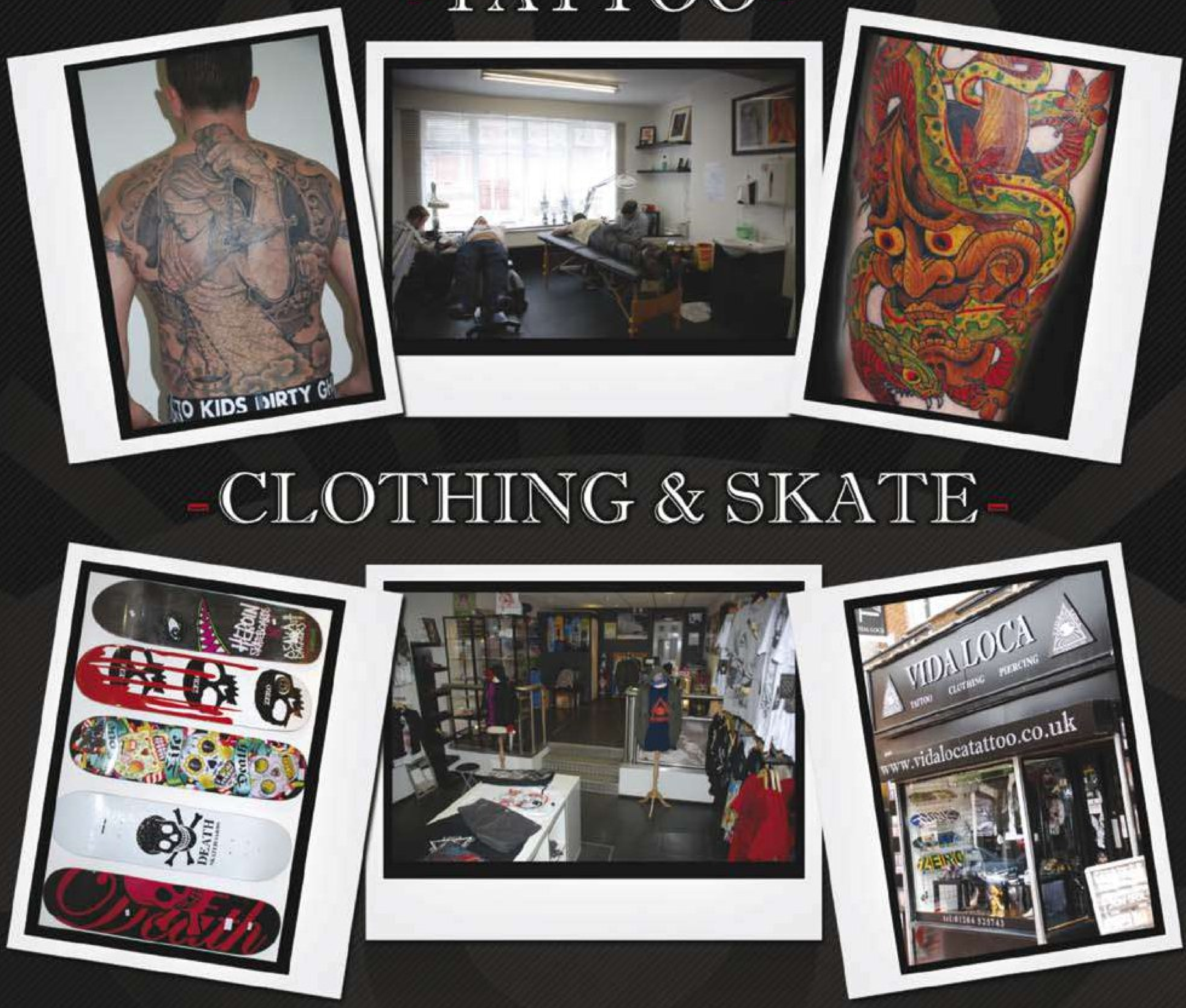
If the issue is put into plain black and white terms, the question that ultimately needs to be asked is whether or not tattoo regulation is making any difference at all. For those artists who feel that regulation is a cash grab and a way for the government to stick their noses where they don't belong, regulation makes all the difference in the world. Unfortunately, that difference is not a welcome one. For others like tattooists who support legislation and regulation as well as the general public, regulation while far from flawless, does seem to do its fair share of good. Given the option, it's safe to suggest that most people would rather be tattooed by an artist who is licensed and whose studio is regularly inspected and fully regulated.

In August 2011, a self-taught and unlicensed tattooist called Joseph Vasarhelyi was charged in Darlington for not being a registered tattooist, for purchasing his equipment online, and because his knowledge of sterilisation procedures was not sufficient enough to operate a legitimate business. Vasarhelyi had not been caught tattooing human beings, but simply practicing on pig-skin. If regulation and an awareness by the authorities on these matters can dissuade or make life generally more difficult for shady tattooists, then even a moderate amount of such an effort surely can't be a bad thing. One less scratcher or corner cutting tattooist in operation is a start toward something that can still be salvaged, reclaimed and strengthened, if only the desire is there to do so.

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AFTER THE MORNING...

Flip to 'noon' in a dictionary and you will find it defined as 'the highest, brightest or finest point or part',which seems surprisingly fitting for French artist NOON. Although the man himself won't reveal what's behind the nickname, one gets a suspicious feeling it could stem from his work, the height of artistic expression

FOR AN APPOINTMENT
e-mail NOON at:
noon.bt@free.fr
For more info on NOON, visit:
boucherie-traditionnelle.com

Juggling most of his tattoo appointments between three shops – Tattoo Culture (New York City), AKA (Berlin) and Mo Coppoletta's Family Business (London) – and his home in Troyes, France, NOON's simple, attention grabbing and instantly recognizable work places him at the forefront of modern day tattooing.

With a style he has sometimes described as 'boucherie traditionnelle', NOON has managed to grab the attention of colleagues, collectors and media alike with his glorious traditional butchery.

Yet, although his capabilities seem rather endless and his takes on why a tattooer is more of an illustrator by nature can be, dare I say it, revolutionary, the French tattooer comes from rather humble and unexpected beginnings.

"For as long as I can remember, I was always around it and was always fascinated by tattooing," says NOON. "As a child, I grew up in a world of tattooed men. Of course, they were not tattoos like we see today. I speak of tattoos mostly

Barbara Pavone ■ NOON

www.skindeep.co.uk





THE TOWN WHERE I GREW UP, AND WHERE I STILL LIVE, WAS WHAT WE THEN CALLED AN OPEN CITY, WHICH MEANT THAT CONVICTS WHO HAD BEEN EXPELLED FROM OTHER CITIES FOUND ASYLUM HERE.

done in prison, all done by hand. I remember as a child, and my parents remind me of this often, when we went to the beach, I had eyes for nothing but the tattoos revealed by undressed bodies."

Focusing most of his work on simple, strong lines and stripping away all the extra details that can sometimes become overwhelming, NOON's style is reflective of the work he was surrounded and inspired by in his youth.

"The town where I grew up, and where I still live, was what we then called an open city, which meant that convicts who had been expelled from other cities found asylum here. And, of course, from their time in prison, these men were heavily tattooed," recounts NOON.

"On the other hand, my city was also a haven for travellers and many families settled there, bringing with them their shared tattooed currency. From 'mort aux vaches' to 'live free or die', passing by the anthology of religious representations alongside the femmes fatales. In such an environment, it was hard for me not to get excited very quickly about this 'art', which was far from being one at the time."

Captivated, NOON began devoting his time to drawing copies of the tattoos he saw on the elders around him. His hands-on introduction to the then much more mysterious world of tattooing was all about self-instruction.

"I am 100 per cent self-taught, like many tattoo artists who began at that time," explains NOON. "It must be said that tattooing was not really developed, we felt that it was going to explode but that was not

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the case then and tattooing was still underground and still considered bad and associated with delinquents. Tattooers were not a legion and kept their secrets to themselves as if they had treasures! The Internet didn't exist. More than one tattooer would have given anything to get the address of Micky Scharpz or Huck and Spaulding."

Recounting memories about learning to weld, assembling his needles with superglue, lacing needles onto ballpoint pens and making magnums with phone cards and razor blades, NOON quickly makes it evident that tattooing was truly something else when he was starting out all those years ago. And apprenticeships? What apprenticeships?

"I found out everything step by step, error after error," he says. "It took me five years to tattoo a line that was almost correct. I studied all styles, tattooed heads of Indians that squinted, dolphins with a vengeance, pseudo Japanese, portraits – basically, I worked the techniques one by one, trying 1,001 methods."

I STUDIED ALL STYLES, TATTOOED HEADS OF INDIANS THAT SQUINTED, DOLPHINS WITH A VENGEANCE, PSEUDO JAPANESE, PORTRAITS – BASICALLY, I WORKED THE TECHNIQUES ONE BY ONE, TRYING A 1001 METHODS.

Before he was even a teenager, NOON was testing out his tattooing skills on himself, before moving on to the flesh of his friends, giving them all a bit of extra street cred. "We acted like the 'grands', the oldest guys that commanded respect in the neighborhood," says NOON. "There was also a lot of code and the most respected were those who surrounded themselves with the most beautiful girls, who had the inside of their eyelids blackened, tattooed with the help of a small spoon to protect the eye."



WHY NOON?

"I am going to keep a bit of mystery about my nickname, but it's a nickname that I've had since adolescence. With time it's become a real name, as only my parents still use the one they gave me at birth: Christophe."

As the years rolled on, NOON's greatest dream – "to one day have a real machine" – finally came true in 1996 when he got his first tattoo machine from Micky Scharpz, "which I still work with from time to time," he says.

Somewhere between consciously striving to develop a signature style and letting natural instinct guide him, NOON arrived at "a learned combination of my development through the world of tattooing so, through my life."

Listening to NOON's own, and very adequate, description of his influences and resulting tattoos gives a sense that he is acutely tuned in to his craft. "I feel closer to freer

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art, such as street art, and more expressive art, such as art brut or art singulier. We thus find that freedom of expression in my work," he says. "However, my work is very respectful of traditional tattooing. It is not art transposed into tattoos, which does not work."

Then there's also his greatest childhood influence. "We find the simplicity of tattoos done in prison," continues NOON. "At that time, they had to tell simple stories with only the line because there was no question of making gradations or heavy fillings. In addition, most designs were very basic as most tattoo artists had absolutely no artistic culture. We thus find this search for simplicity, basicity in my line. I could easily stop my tattoos after the trace as they already have finitude at that stage. All that I add subsequently is not obligarory. Personally, I really feel trapped or stifled by classic tattooing."

Flipping through NOON's portfolio, all of his work seems beautifully unified, a constant NOON-esque theme running through every piece he creates. Which makes one think his clients must surely be handing over complete control to him. Faced with this theory, NOON disputes it with a unique take on the meaning of artist versus illustrator.

"The freedom that my clients give me is in the carrying out, but nevertheless, it remains contained by their plans, their ideas," says NOON. "In this sense, I think tattooing is more a matter of illustrators than artists. I do not like this notion of a 'tattoo artist'. I find this a bit pretentious for people who have so little space for expression. The work of a tattooer is primarily a matter of illustrations and in that sense I think we should be talking more about 'tattoo illustrator' than 'tattoo artist', no?"

If you're interested in getting your very own NOON tattoo, the last is a point worth noting. It's no surprise that he prefers concrete descriptions and ideas from his clients and hopes they approach him prepared, homework done, and with a clear head.

"I like for a tattoo to say something. Sometimes I accept projects that are completely free but I find that a bit more difficult, and more risky for the person," admits NOON. And he holds the same standards to himself, ensuring every drop of ink that goes under his skin has a reason, a story.



WHAT'S THE ORIGIN OF 'BOUCHERIE TRADITIONNELLE'?

"I had a shop for a few years that was located on Boucherat Street and I was sort of the butcher of Boucherat Street. I used this image to associate my work with the concept of traditional 'boucherie.' I know it's a bit convoluted, but it's the truth! I swear."

MY WORK IS VERY RESPECTFUL OF TRADITIONAL TATTOOING. IT IS NOT ART TRANSPOSED INTO TATTOOS, WHICH DOES NOT WORK.

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"My personal tattoos develop over the course of my meetings; exchanges with other tattoo artists, personal friends. Many of my tattoos were done by people who never held a machine before," says NOON. "As a general rule, I don't offer but a small part of my body and I don't allow anything but traces. I'm getting older – it hurts!"

On a quest to compose an exciting, ever-changing history for himself, NOON just can't sit still and seems to always be on the road, or about to get on it. Although continuously working in a changing environment is something he has been doing for years, he admits to still being fazed by the unknown on occasion. "You get used to it and I love meeting new people, [discovering] new ways of thinking, watching people work. On the other hand, starting with a new shop always stresses me a little. I'm always a little anxious and I must admit that sometimes I only wait for one thing: the end the session."

Travelling, exploring new cities and discovering new clients are some of the positives NOON runs through when asked about what it's like to be a guest artist in a shop, but it's not always easy. "The main negative point is having to adapt your working methods to each environment," he says. "Even if shops seem to all resemble each other, few really work in the same way."

Also regularly taking appointments in his home in Troyes, France, that's where, when it really comes down to it, NOON feels most comfortable. As he explains it, it's the only environment that allows him to provide a truly unrivalled tattoo experience. "I don't take more than one appointment per day, which really gives me time to take care of my clients. It's really a different rhythm than that of a shop. When I'm in a shop, I have very little time to devote other than that allotted for the tattoo. At home, I can take the time for a coffee, I often dine with them; it's really a different approach. It's much more relational than commercial."

Taking a look back at his career, the master of lines, who was the 2010 inductee into Bob Baxter's Hall of Fame dedicated to the 101 most influential people in the tattoo world, comes to a simple conclusion: "If I had to start over, I think I would do the same thing."

Continuing, NOON explains, "I am easily able to develop a technique if it is necessary to me and I don't think I would be able to do the same if I started today as an apprentice. Today, most people don't know how to weld and everyone is content with the needles present on the market, which is what limits creativity. Few know how to tweak their machines, and many don't know that a tattoo is made to last and not only to look good in a photo."

His roots may have been unconventional – just think of NOON growing up surrounded and inspired by jail tattoos and building his own 'machines' as a teenager to practice on himself – but who could possibly argue with the results? In the words of the artist himself, NOON is "passionate certainly, poetic maybe, amorous for sure".

TODAY, MOST PEOPLE DON'T KNOW HOW TO WELD AND EVERYONE IS CONTENT WITH THE NEEDLES PRESENT ON THE MARKET, WHICH IS WHAT LIMITS CREATIVITY.

WHAT MAKES YOU PROUD OF A TATTOO?

"My achievements are full-fledged tattoos. They were thought of for the body and they would not work the same way on a canvas as they were not thought of like that. They play with the body and they respect the criteria of durability of traditional tattoos. They are thought of for time, to be readable in 10 years like in 30 years."

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MAKE ART, NOT WAR

Alex Gross is one of those painters who creates other worlds within his paintings. Strange worlds in which you are likely to find a modern day Jesus, preaching before a Prada billboard, with subtle digs at our obsession with technology… could you handle a tattoo of a piece of art from this man?





ALEX GROSS
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CA 90046 USA

www.alexgross.com
alex@alexgross.com

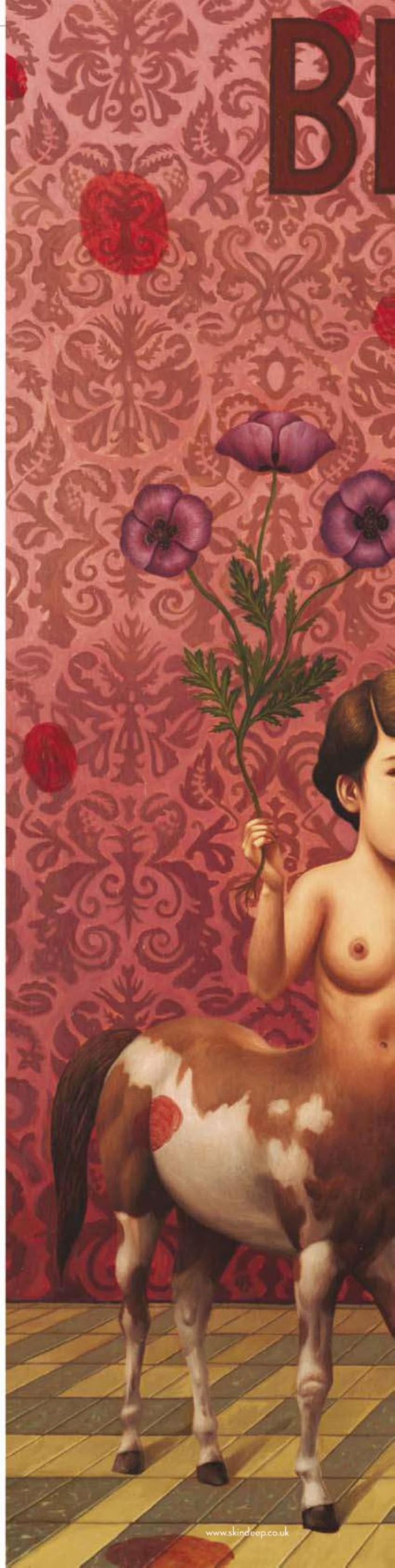
Trent Aitken-Smith
Alex Gross

On another day, you may find a four-legged woman playing tennis with an ice-cream cone. They are all technically brilliant, have a deeper message (if you care to dig) and best of all, they all come shrouded in surrealism.

Since graduating with honours from the Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, Alex has hosted six solo shows, a retrospective and published two art books, but his love of painting started a long time before this, with an art form it is hard not to love – comics.

"I was super-interested in comic books as a kid and X-Men was by far my favourite. But I loved all the Marvel comics; Spiderman, Hulk, whatever. My parents were very supportive although they were not artists themselves. They valued the arts and creativity and encouraged me. I loved to draw characters from the comics and that's how I learned to draw people. I also made up a lot of my own stories and characters.

"At this time and age, my influences were all the comic book gods; Jack Kirby, Steve Ditko, John Byrne, Walt Simonson, Frank Miller, etc. I used to want to do comics when I was at art school. That was my dream, but I quickly lost interest in the medium as I discovered all the other possible things I could do with my artwork. Since I have never liked working on a deadline, and I don't like being told what to draw or paint, I don't think that comics or graphic novels are for



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ITTERSWEET

me, but you never know.

"Later I got into illustration and painting and discovered painters like George Tooker and Max Beckmann. I also learned about propaganda art from Russia and from the American 1930s WPA stuff, which I also loved. All propaganda art appeals to me; Russian, Chinese, 1930s American, Japanese war propaganda... you name it. I have always liked heroic imagery probably because of the early influence of comic books. One thing about it is the combination of figure and type, which again is reminiscent of comics and very exciting. I was also very interested in gothic painting, mostly from the Netherlands in the 1400s. Artists like Jan van Eyck and Rogier van der Weyden. These days, I am not so much influenced by artists anymore, I am more influenced by advertising and popular culture... or the lack of it.

"For the last few years, my work has been more focused on modern life and consumption, commercialism. My work prior to that was more Victorian. I like to combine both things at the same time. I love the Victorian era and the visuals that go along with it, but I also feel the need to comment on the world as I see it now in my work, rather than just doing art that looks really old fashioned. The need to express myself is really paramount. I have opinions and ideas and I want those to be a part of my work. I don't want to get stuck in a style that prohibits me from discussing themes that I find important or interesting."



KEEP CALM & CARRY ON
As opposed to impartially providing information, propaganda, in its most basic sense, presents information primarily to influence an audience. Propaganda is often biased, with facts selectively presented (thus possibly lying by omission) to encourage a particular synthesis, or uses loaded messages to produce an emotional rather than rational response to the information presented. The desired result is a change of the attitude toward the subject in the target audience to further a political, or other type of agenda. While the term propaganda has acquired a strongly negative connotation by association with its most manipulative and jingoistic examples, propaganda in its original sense was neutral, and could refer to uses that were generally benign or innocuous, such as public health recommendations, signs encouraging citizens to participate in a census or election, or messages encouraging persons to report crimes to the police, among others.

WITH SO MUCH GOING INTO ONE PAINTING, I ASK ALEX TO EXPLAIN HOW HE GOES ABOUT PRODUCING A PIECE.

"I always prepare tight comps before I do a painting, I don't just start painting and hope something interesting emerges. I do all my sketching and comp work in Photoshop, combining photos and drawing there. Photoshop is a critically important tool for me given how I like to work. I often start with a found image, which may be an ad for something or a photo of someone. I'll take it into Photoshop and start chopping it up and combining it with other things and build from there.

"The whole process varies drastically depending on size, but my larger work usually takes around three-four weeks to complete. And that doesn't really count the conception and sketch phases because this is harder to measure. Sometimes I start a comp and then leave it alone for months, then I come back to it later and finish it off. It's hard to say how long the idea and comp really took. But once I start painting I keep track of my hours and I usually try to finish each piece once I've started painting it, instead of putting it down for a while.

"Photoshop has changed my entire way of working and not only made my life easier, but I dare say, it's made my paintings better. It's made it much easier for me to explore ideas and try things that would have involved lots more drawing, Xeroxing, cutting and pasting 12 years ago. I really could not do the work I do now without it. Some artists do not take advantage of tools like Photoshop and that's their call. I suppose for more traditional painters it probably does not change their life too much, however everyone documents their work through photography and the computer has also become a critical tool for that as well. Ten years ago it was still film and scanning but now digital photography is much better than film ever was for capturing colours correctly. It still requires some colour adjustment work in Photoshop. Some artists cannot do that themselves and I consider that a handicap, especially when you are making a book of your artwork."

> THESE DAYS, I AM NOT SO MUCH INFLUENCED BY ARTISTS ANYMORE, I AM MORE INFLUENCED BY ADVERTISING AND POPULAR CULTURE... OR THE LACK OF IT

ALEX HAS HAD A FEW OF HIS PAINTINGS TURNED INTO TATTOOS BY FANS AND I ASK HIM HOW HE FEELS KNOWING THAT PEOPLE LOVE HIS WORK SO MUCH THAT THEY WANT IT ON THEIR BODIES FOREVER.

"Over the years, a few people have emailed me photos of their tattoos that were based on my paintings. It always makes a great impression on me and I hope that they won't grow tired of them years later! Sometimes, I get tired of my own work if I have it on the wall for too long and I hope that doesn't happen to them with their own bodies. Personally, I really love Japanese tattoos. I have a few books with amazing photos of Japanese full sleeve tattoos and whole body stuff. They are incredible and some of the artists

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KEEP CALM & CARRY ON READING

Communication theory points out that people can be persuaded by the communicator's credibility, expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness. The elaboration likelihood model as well as heuristic models of persuasion, suggest that a number of factors (e.g. the degree of interest of the recipient of the communication), influence the degree to which people allow superficial factors to persuade them. Nobel Prize-winning psychologist, Herbert Simon, won the Nobel prize for his theory that people are cognitive misers. That is, in a society of mass information people are forced to make decisions quickly and often superficially, as opposed to logically. Did you actually read all of that or just look at the picture?



I HAVE OPINIONS AND IDEAS AND I WANT THOSE TO BE A PART OF MY WORK. I DON'T WANT TO GET STUCK IN A STYLE THAT PROHIBITS ME FROM DISCUSSING THEMES THAT I FIND IMPORTANT OR INTERESTING

who make them are real masters of their craft. That would probably be the type of thing I would want if I were to get tattoos; full sleeves in the Japanese style, probably based on some of my favourite Japanese print artists, like Yoshitoshi. However, my wife is Japanese, and she would never allow me to do such a thing. Tattoos in Japan have a 'history' and there is still a lot of prejudice there against tattooed people. My wifes family still lives in Japan and we visit them regularly – I think I would not be welcome if I

got the full sleeve treatment... so it probably won't happen."

AND HOW ABOUT LEARNING THE CRAFT HIMSELF?

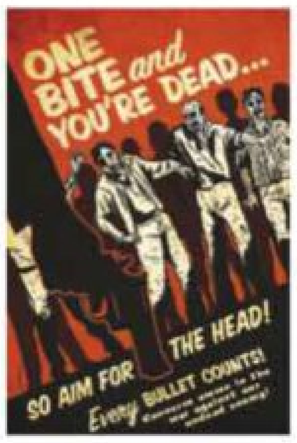
"I would be so afraid to fuck up somebody's tattoo that I don't think I could do it! Unfortunately, Photoshop has eroded my drawing ability because it is so forgiving. The best tattoo artists must be excellent draftsmen and I am no longer a very good draftsman. It would be an awesome thing to do, but I probably will stick with what I do best, at least for now."

AT LEAST ALEX HASN'T SHUT THAT DOOR COMPLETELY. TALKING ABOUT THE FUTURE, WITH SO MUCH ACCOMPLISHED SO FAR, WHAT ARE ALEX'S PLANS?

"The way I paint – with oil paint on canvas and panel – will probably continue to be my preferred medium, but the imagery I paint will hopefully evolve. It has evolved quite a bit in the last few shows, my earlier work was much more Victorian compared to what I am doing now. I hope that will continue and I will try to push myself to keep changing. I really don't want to do the same painting over and over!

"I have my next solo exhibition at the Jonathan LeVine gallery in New York on February 25th, 2012. I'm working on the new paintings for that show as we speak. After that, I don't know where I will show next. So far, I've mainly been showing in New York and I want to find a gallery to work with in my hometown of Los Angeles and also in London."

OVER THE YEARS, A FEW PEOPLE HAVE E-MAILED ME PHOTOS OF THEIR TATTOOS THAT WERE BASED ON MY PAINTINGS... I HOPE THAT THEY WON'T GROW TIRED OF THEM YEARS LATER!



NOW PANIC & FREAK OUT

Of all the potential targets for propaganda, children are the most vulnerable because they are the most unprepared for the critical reasoning and contextual comprehension required to determine whether a message is propaganda or not. The attention children give their environment during development, due to the process of developing their understanding of the world, will cause them to absorb propaganda indiscriminately. Thus, television is of particular interest in regard to children's vulnerability to propaganda. According to Judith Rich Harris' group-socialization theory, children learn the majority of what they do not receive paternally, through genes, from their peer groups. The implication is that if peer-groups can be indoctrinated through propaganda at a young age to hold certain beliefs, the group will self-regulate the indoctrination, since new members to the group will adapt their beliefs to fit the group's.





Emin's piece about all the men she ever slept with which was a uniquely bold and daring venture for any artists, particularly a female one. However, as you mentioned, most of these very upper echelon artists have become brands themselves and people fawn over anything that they have ever touched. It becomes a silly game really. I am no expert on what is art, so I cannot tell you what is and what isn't; I simply know what I am interested in and, mostly, I am interested in representational art rather than conceptual or installation art. But that does not mean there is not some very interesting and sophisticated stuff going on in that world but often to find it, you have to sift through tons of bullshit first!"

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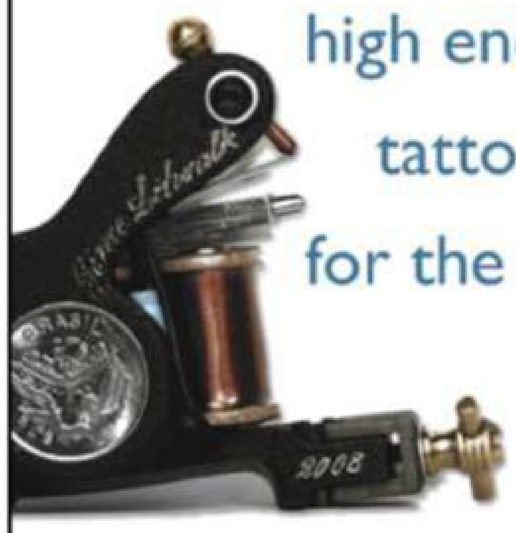
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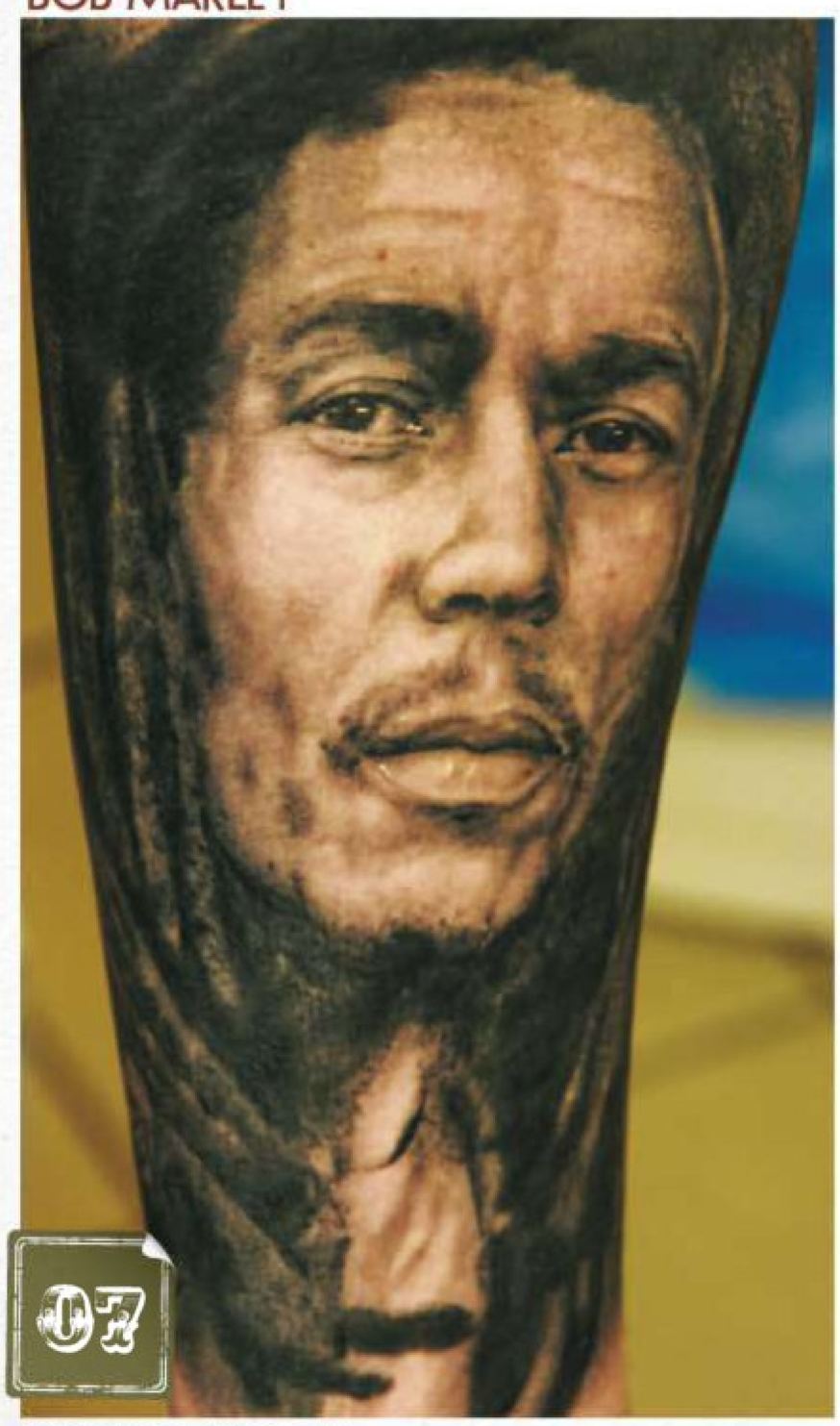
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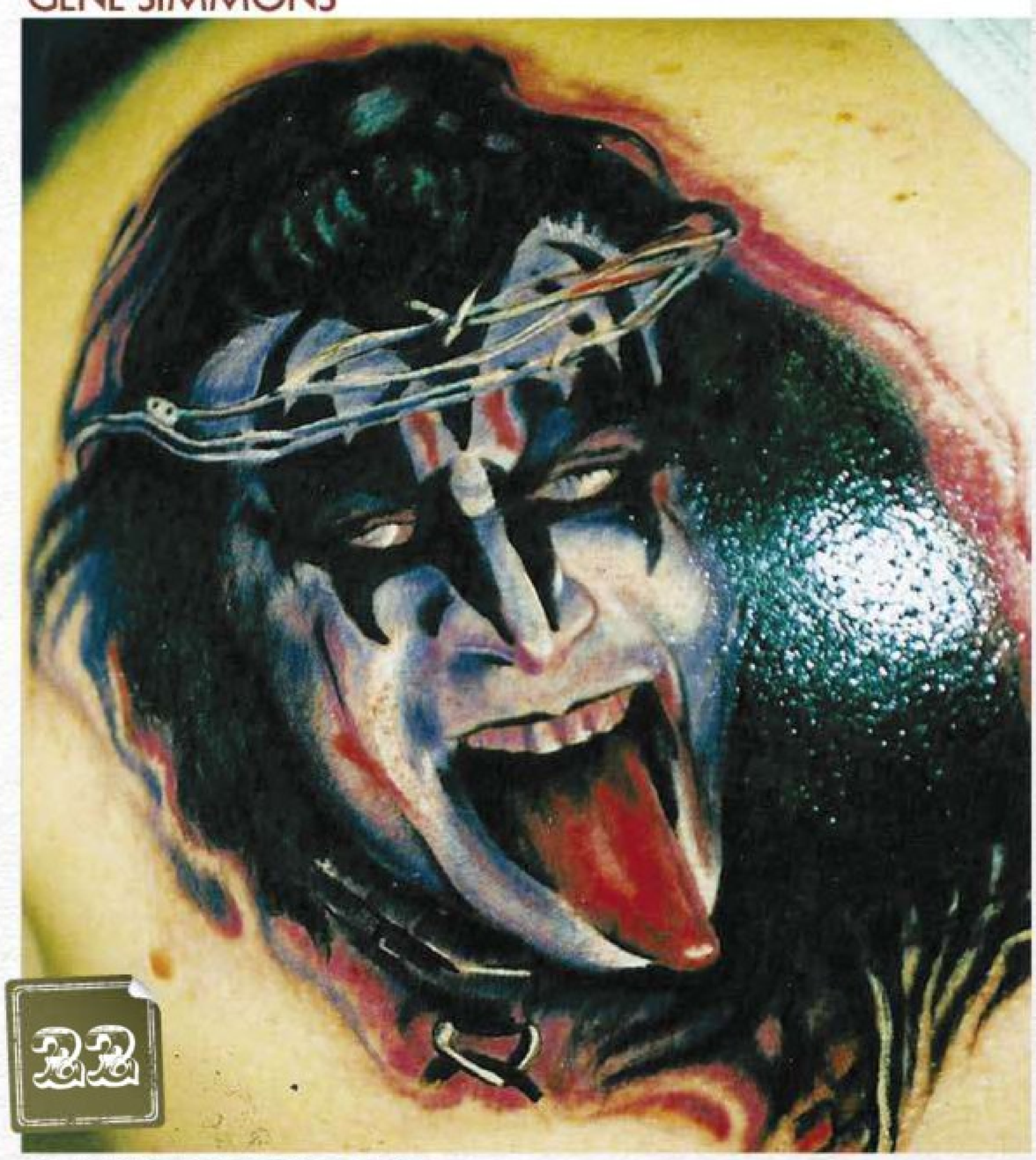
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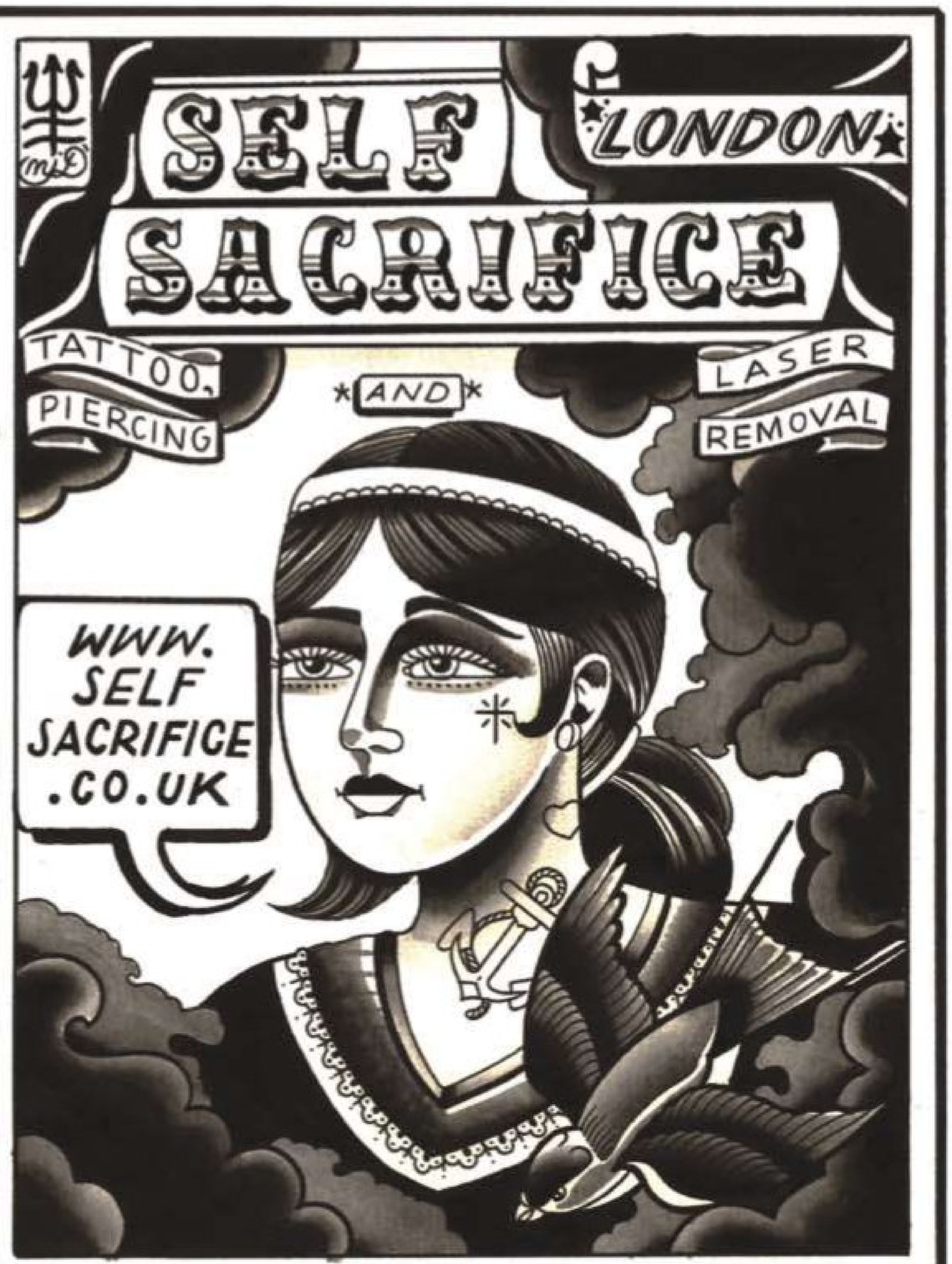
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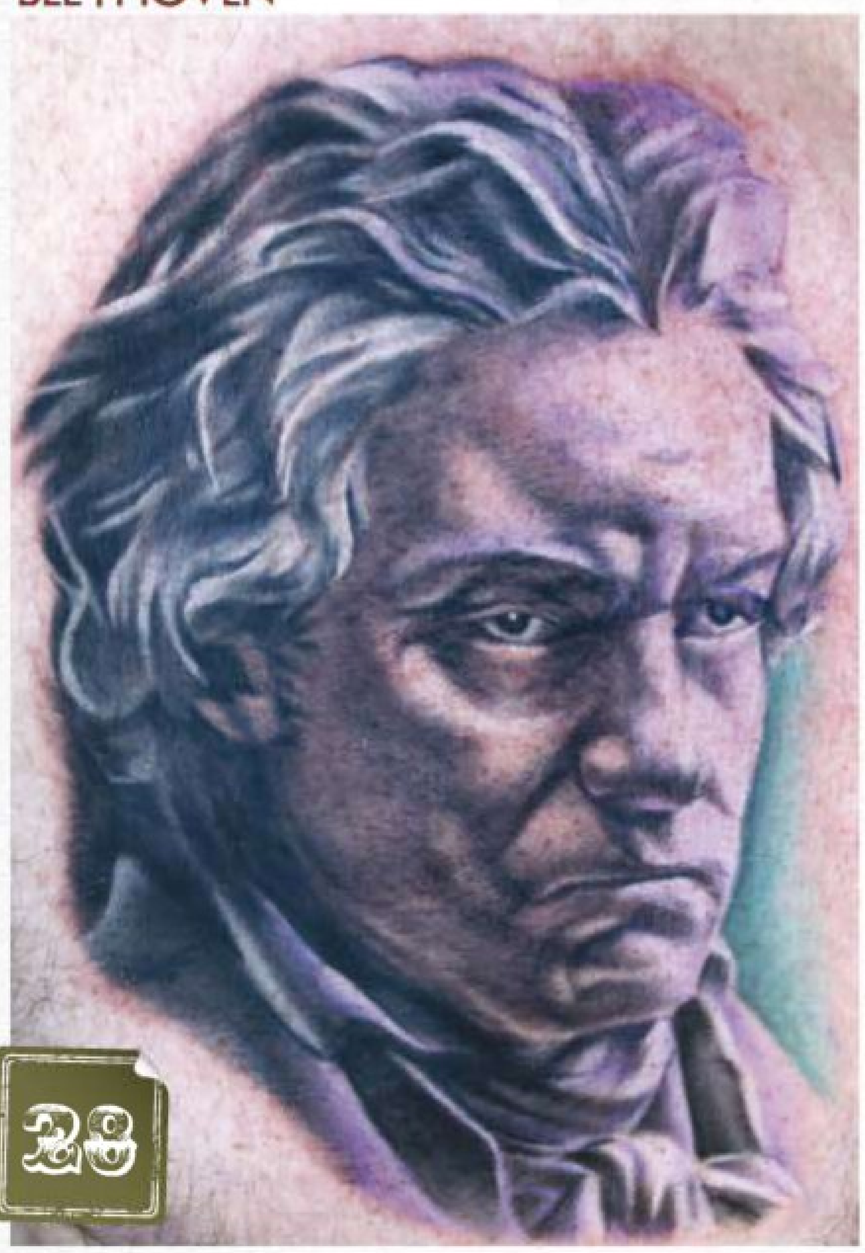
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31

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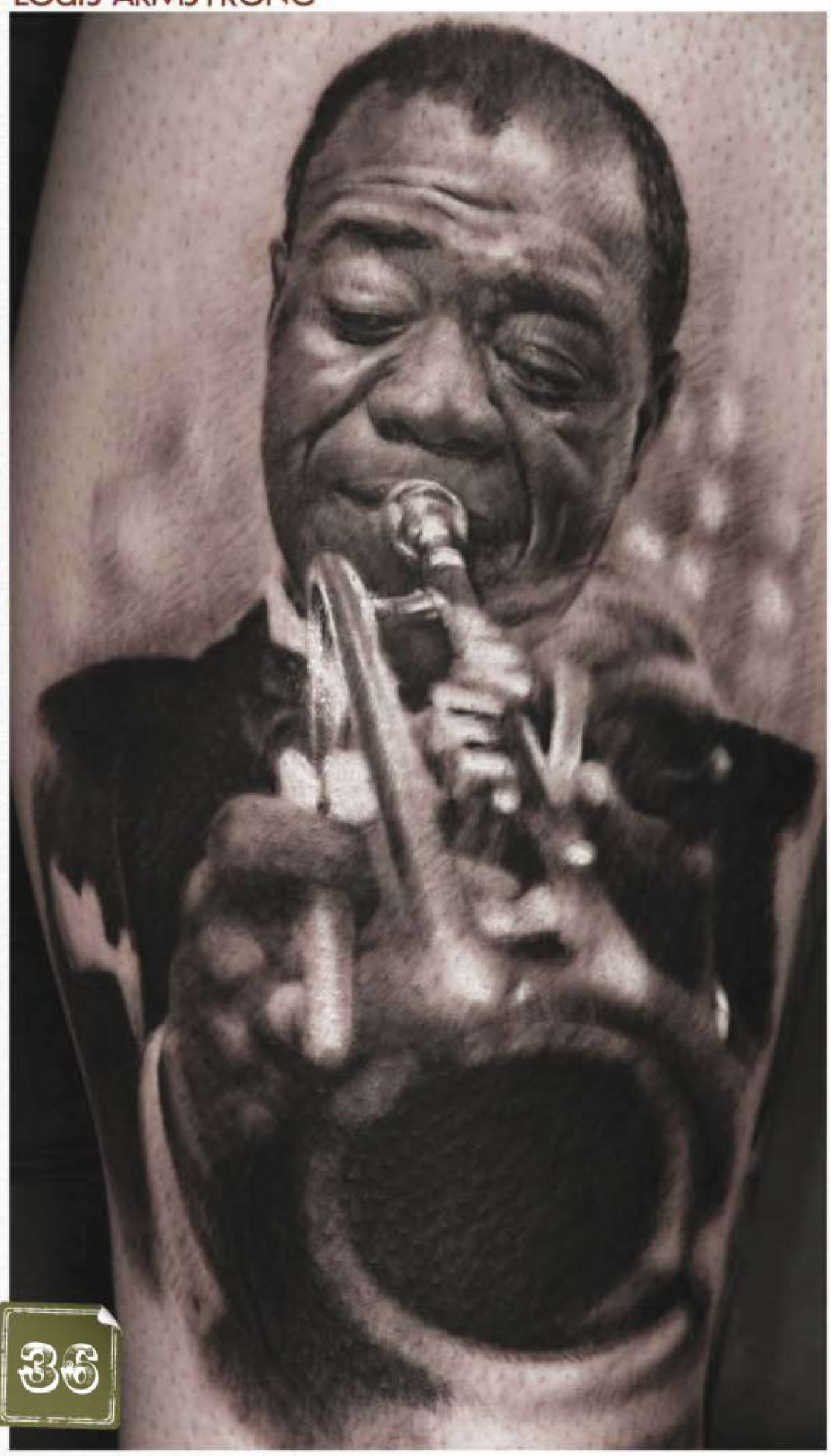
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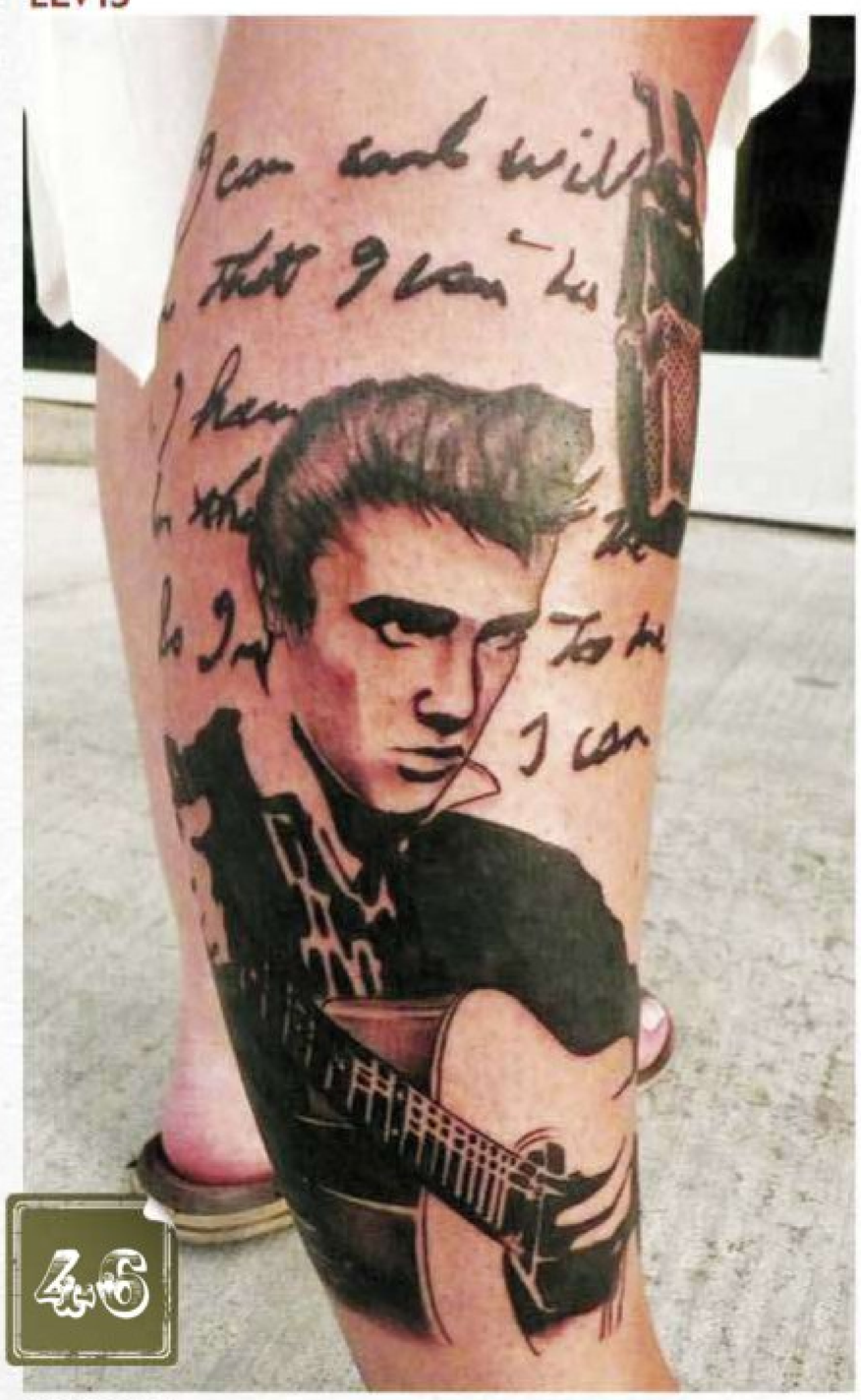
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DON'T BLINK

If tattooists were to pass down ten commandments to their clients, surely one of them would have to be 'thou shalt bloody well sit still'. We all know how important that part is, but practising what you preach is always tricky, and for Ivana Belakova it would likely be impossible, because she's one of those people who's in perpetual motion. Blink and you'll miss her…



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"I travel a lot!" she says, "in many cases it's for work but not always. I love to travel and see different things." That might be guest spots, but you can also glimpse her distinctive style at a few conventions every year. Try not to distract her, though – "it's kind of stressful for me as I have a hard time focusing, and it's too distracting to have so many people around me. When it comes to comfort I definitely prefer working in a shop!"

Her shop of choice is Slovakia's Tattoo Rascal studio. "I call it my base, although I'm still a freelance tattoo artist, as I'm constantly on the road!" Her time there started with a guest spot three years ago, and now it's the European shop she returns to the most, but her's is a peripatetic lifestyle to the extent that she only takes on smaller projects that she can finish during her stay, wherever it may be. "Sometimes I stay couple of months in one shop, sometimes less than that, so I only take work that I know I can finish."

It must be like getting inked by the Roadrunner; does it ever cause problems? "The disadvantage is that sometimes I can't do big pieces," she admits, "which I would love to do!

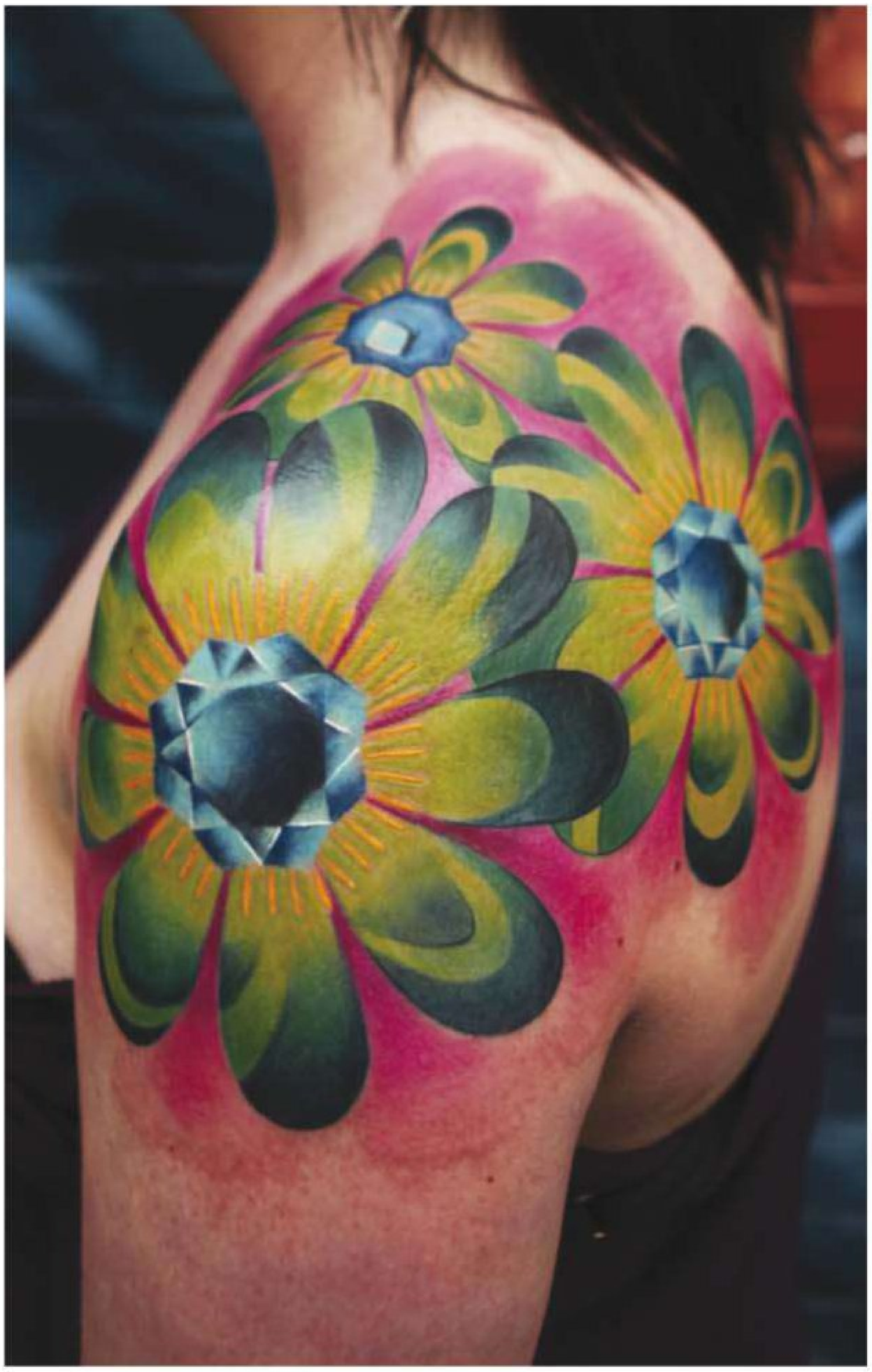
On the other hand, I'm glad that I get to finish whatever I start within a couple of months, as opposed to the next year or so. I like it because my way of thinking is constantly changing and sometimes I find it hard to connect with old pieces that I started a while ago."

Russ Thorne
Ivana



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GETTING IT RIGHT
So what makes a great tattoo, in Ivana's opinion? "It's the idea, the composition, the quality, placement...the whole artistic feel," she says. But there's also forward planning: "I like to see something that will look good in a few years' time, not only for the first few months."

READY, STEADY...

This roadrunner's tattoo journey began in the back of a Slovakian pub with "a guy". It sounds like the setup for a classic horror tale, but as she explains, tattoo shops weren't big in her country at the time. "It was so exciting, especially because I was under age. It was a little ornamental thing, I was hiding it from my parents for some time."

Since then things have become much easier for tattoo collectors, with young people in particular becoming much more open minded. "They're getting bigger, more colourful pieces done," she says, "and they're not hiding their artwork as they were before. The tattoo scene in Slovakia is getting bigger and more exciting every day, which is great!"

Whether tattooing achieved wider acceptance or not, it feels like it was the inevitable destination for Ivana, as she talks about her childhood love of art. "When I was around 13, I used to cut out pictures from magazines and had my brother draw on me with marker so I looked like the models," she says. From there it was on to her first tattoo encounter down the pub, and then work at a friend's studio. "I had no idea how to tattoo, so I tried them on my friends and after the first one, I was hooked!"

In typically speedy fashion she pretty much decided to become a tattoo artist on the spot. It was a leap of faith motivated by real passion, she says, "what drove me the most was definitely my passion for the art! I thought tattoos were sexy, and I saw the beauty in them."

> WHEN I WAS AROUND 13, I USED TO CUT OUT PICTURES FROM MAGAZINES AND HAD MY BROTHER DRAW ON ME WITH MARKER SO I LOOKED LIKE THE MODELS

To see her pastel-like creations these days, it's hard to imagine that she began with only black and grey work until the desire for colour arrived. Luckily she had some willing skin to indulge her craving on. "I started doing colour tattoos for free

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after work on my friends who let me create pretty much whatever I wanted. I was experimenting with inks, needles, machines... to the point where I sort of developed my own style," she recalls.

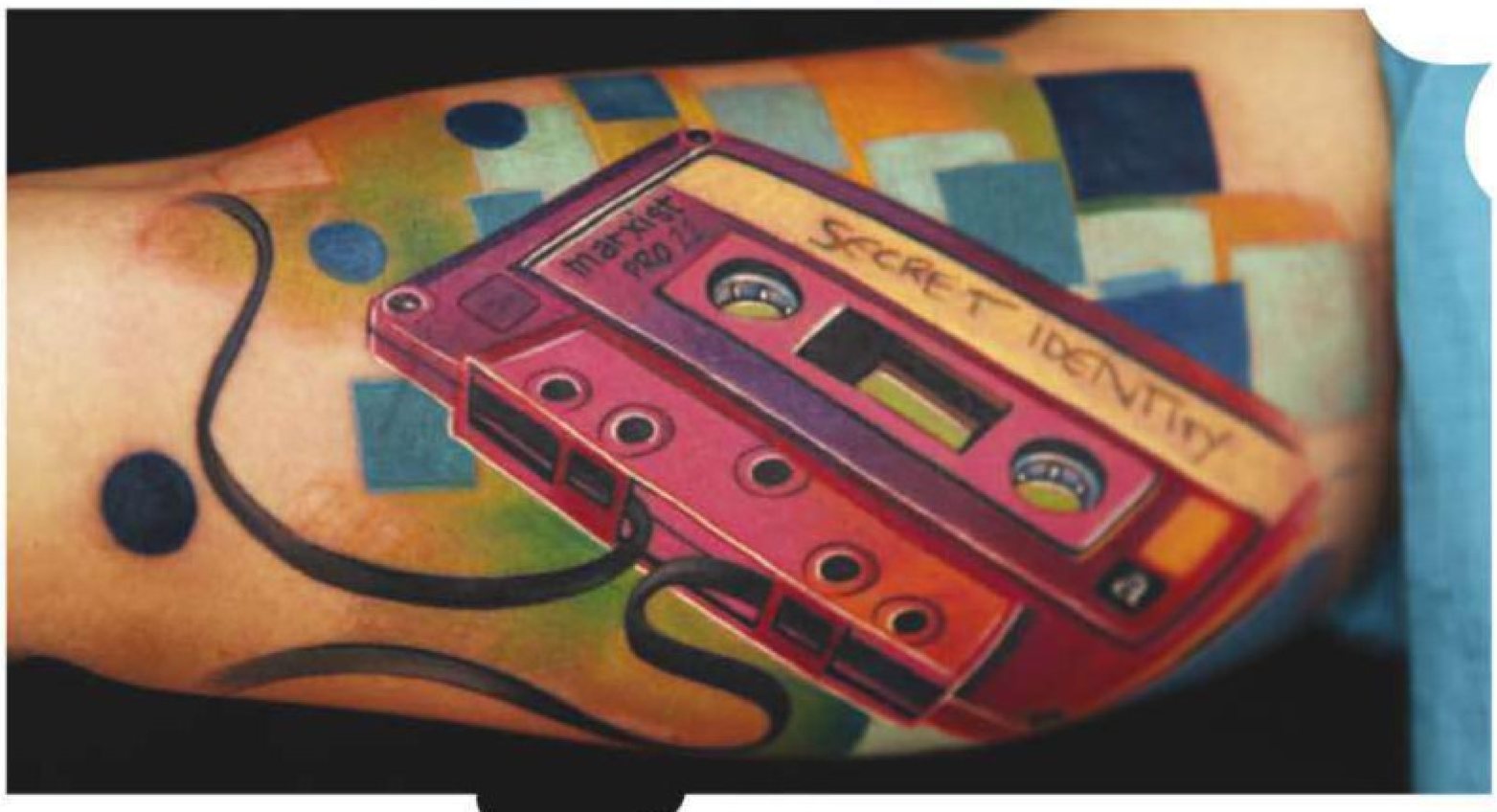
So, several inked pals later, is she content with how the colour developed? "It took me years to get to this level, but I'm still never satisfied," she says. "I look at the tattoo I did yesterday and I would change it today. My style is constantly evolving, with every tattoo I do I learn something new, and the level I'm at right now is not final and never will be. I constantly try new things and that's



the beauty of it; I can't get bored!"

Sometimes her new ideas just arrive, unbidden, and on other occasions she's inspired by another artist, but behind all this shifting development there's a firm philosophy: this is one artist who knows what she's trying to achieve through her work. "I don't want to be just an ordinary tattooist who does flash all the time and copies other people," she says. "I like it when my tattoos look like artwork and not like stickers! They have to have a nice flow, be proportionate to the body and be different... I want my tattoos to be individual. Just like my customers are!"





IN THE CHAIR

Ivana is a very client-centred artist. Whether it's getting the design right or making them feel comfortable on the day, their needs are always at the front of her mind. She can take this to extremes, keeping hours that even the most determined needlesmith might baulk at – although alcohol might play a small part. "My good friends are my worst clients, they're so demanding! There are times when I've been out, and a friend wants to get a tattooed by me at five or six am while I'm still

> WHAT DROVE ME THE MOST WAS DEFINITELY MY PASSION FOR THE ART! I THOUGHT TATTOOS WERE SEXY, AND I SAW THE BEAUTY IN THEM

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drinking, and I've actually gone to the shop and tattooed them."

Sozzled sunrise sessions aren't compulsory, of course, although she confesses to being an early-starter. Instead, normal procedure is taking one client a day to give them all her attention. "Above all, I want them to be happy with the artwork," she says of her aims for any tattooing session. "Although they're nervous, I want them to feel good about the whole process. I want them to have a memorable experience and also have some fun! My clients' tattoos matter to me and I want them to know it! I always want to do the best job possible!"

When she's in the zone she'll work almost non-stop apart from food breaks or comfort breaks for clients, and there's a fair amount of preparation before needle hits skin. "I like it when my clients have an idea of what they want to get," she explains, "but I also appreciate some references so I can get a better understanding of what they're looking for. I definitely prefer to have freedom when it comes to designing it, though!"

She sums it up by saying she likes to have an idea and a little description and then being left to work her magic, which means she's not afraid to offer some guidance if she thinks it's needed. "I'm very honest and if I disagree with something I'll say so." This is easier said than done in some cases, she explains, with clients overlooking the fact that skin is rather different to paper and that tweaks are often required to their designs. "I have a hard time convincing them that it needs to be slightly different," she says, but she tends to persevere as "I also want to enjoy the tattoo I do!"

While Ivana won't do every kind of image and style, she doesn't really have any pet hates when it comes to artwork (apart from a mild aversion to "big, black and bold tribal"). "If a tattoo is done well, I can appreciate it," she says. The same is not true of people's behaviour, though, where she definitely has a few commandments of her own. "I don't like it when my

> I LOOK AT THE TATTOO I DID YESTERDAY AND I WOULD CHANGE IT TODAY. MY STYLE IS CONSTANTLY EVOLVING, WITH EVERY TATTOO I DO I LEARN SOMETHING NEW, AND THE LEVEL I'M AT RIGHT NOW IS NOT FINAL AND NEVER WILL BE

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I LIKE IT WHEN MY TATTOOS LOOK LIKE ARTWORK AND NOT LIKE STICKERS! THEY HAVE TO HAVE A NICE FLOW, BE PROPORTIONATE TO THE BODY AND BE DIFFERENT...

clients whistle while I'm tattooing or when they take cigarette breaks every ten minutes," she explains.

"Also if someone is constantly asking me questions I can't concentrate very well.

"And there are the 'naughty' customers too," she continues, "the ones who don't come in on time, the ones who leave before I even get to finish their piece because they want to go for drinks with their friends."

Top of the list though – and many would sympathise – are people who are rude to her. "I don't appreciate it!" she says, "if someone doesn't have respect towards tattooing as an art form and for me as an artist, I'd rather just not do the tattoo! I put lot of effort and energy into my work because it means a lot to me, and I want them to feel the same."

IVANA'S INK

Ivana's latest addition to her collection is a chest piece from a certain Jeff Gogue, and the plan is to get her next piece done by him, too. Also on the artist hitlist is Buena Vista Tattoo Club's Volko, but she confesses that although she's trying to collect artwork from all her favourite artists she's keeping things restrained for now.

"I'm very picky with my tattoos and artists, that's why I'm still not very tattooed. It takes me some time to figure out what I want to get done, and then, in many cases, I end up doing the tattoo on one of my clients. So I just wait until I figure out something new!"

She keeps it simple when healing a new piece, washing it twice a day and keeping it covered for the first three days, adding a little moisturiser and keeping it out of the sun. Before that is the small matter of sitting for the tattoo, of course, and here she's pretty honest. "When it comes me getting a tattoo, I'm very quiet because I have to be mentally prepared. I actually hate getting tattooed because of the pain involved!"









CATCH HER IF YOU CAN

These are minor gripes in an otherwise cheery picture, though. Ivana describes her favourite aspect of being a working tattoo artist in one word: freedom. "I like the freedom that comes along with tattooing. It takes me to many different places in the world and through it I've made some great friends! I am constantly meeting all sorts of people!"

So it was the right path, from marker pen on skin to globetrotting artist? "Yes, I like it very much as I like to mix other people's fantasies with mine! I'm also very happy that people give me so much freedom in leaving their designs up to me. They let me create something for them without controlling me too much, which I really enjoy."

It also looks like tattooing provides the stillness and serenity in the middle of Ivana's whirlwind working life, especially when she talks about the tiny details of a working day. "I like to prepare my design, I like to set up my table, and to actually create the tattoo. The best part is when I complete a piece and I see the smile on my customer's face," she concludes. "And when I feel down, tattooing is like healing for my soul."

You can keep track of Ivana via **Ivana Tattoo Art** on that Facebook, and get in touch with her via *toxic-tattoo@hotmail.com*.

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GETTING A BUZZ ON

Ah, the sweet smell of an empty coliseum… or at least that's what it looks like before all those stands go up and the car park gets harder and harder to find room in. Thus began Tattoo Jam 2011



Hard to believe that exactly one year ago, I stood in the middle of all of this and wondered if I was really going to take on the beast of Skin Deep and its associated entourage. Now? I wouldn't change it for the world. Well… for the world I might, but you know what I mean.

One year ago, if you told me I would have been sitting on the floor of a hotel lobby with a case of Budweiser, a loaf of bread, Jesse Smith, Sweet Lorraine, Tanane Whitfield and the design crew from Skin Deep comparing great stuff we had all discovered on our phones, I would have laughed in your face. I'm not exactly sure where the loaf of bread comes into play though. I think maybe Jesse bought it out of curiosity at the all night ASDA. Just because he could. Only at Tattoo Jam, huh. Now let me think…

ARTIST FRIDAY

The day that the artists get to hang out with each other. The day that old friends catch up before the madness begins. The day that artists get tattooed by other artists is always a fun sequence of events.

And what better way to start the show than to check in throughout the day on Jesse Smith tattooing last years award winner Mat Lapping? Man, that was a long stretch but that's what you get for holding out for what you really want. Killer work.

It was also pretty great to see the French contingent at the Jam meeting up with each other for the first time in years – Xoil, Noon, Jef and Kostas. Even better to find myself entering into a conversation about the talent of Yann Black. The fact that his contemporaries enjoyed the show so much gives me much faith that next year, I may be able to pull off the impossible and get him over. Fingers crossed.

WINNERS LIST

Best of Saturday/Best of convention
Robert by Henrik Gallon

Best of Sunday
Joanne by Kosa

Large Black & Grey
Greg by Anabi

Small Black & Grey
Mat by Rogal

Large Colour
George Mavridis

Small Colour
Lila by Anabi

Portrait
Daniel by Remis

Back Piece
Dariusz by Kosa

Chest Piece
Danielle by Sam Bowyer

Celtic/Tribal
Jim by Podge

Oriental
Soren by Johan Finné

"I WORKED TATTOO JAM FOR THE FIRST TIME LAST WEEKEND AND IT WAS GREAT FUN! THE BEST CONVENTION I'VE WORKED SO FAR!"

AIMÉE LOU, BESPOKE TATTOO COMPANY, GUILDFORD, UK



Event of the day without doubt was the MasterClass that included the skills of Jeff Gogue, Jesse Smith, Nikko Hurtado, Lianne Moule and Jason Butcher. The results of said friendly showdown can still be seen and bid for at tattoojam.com/entertainment/auction (until September 30), but watching these works being created from the ground up was a privilege and a pleasure. I don't think there was one person in that room not totally knocked out by watching these world class talents working live in the flesh. Not something you get to see everyday, that's for sure.

Sion Smith Kayla Wren

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WINNER BEST BACK PIECE

Dariusz by Kosa Tattoo at Artline Studio



WINNER SMALL COLOUR

Lila by Anabi at Anabi Tattoo









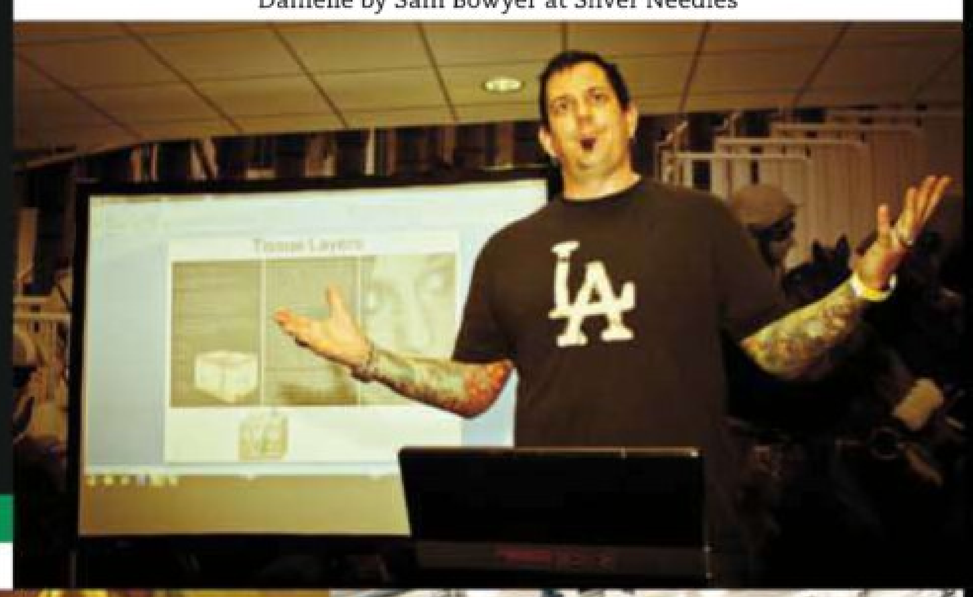




WINNER BEST CHEST PIECE

Danielle by Sam Bowyer at Silver Needles







WINNER BEST PORTRAIT

Daniel Flower by Remis







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WINNER SMALL BLACK AND GREY

Matby Rogal at Jazz Tattoo

WINNER BEST OF SUNDAY

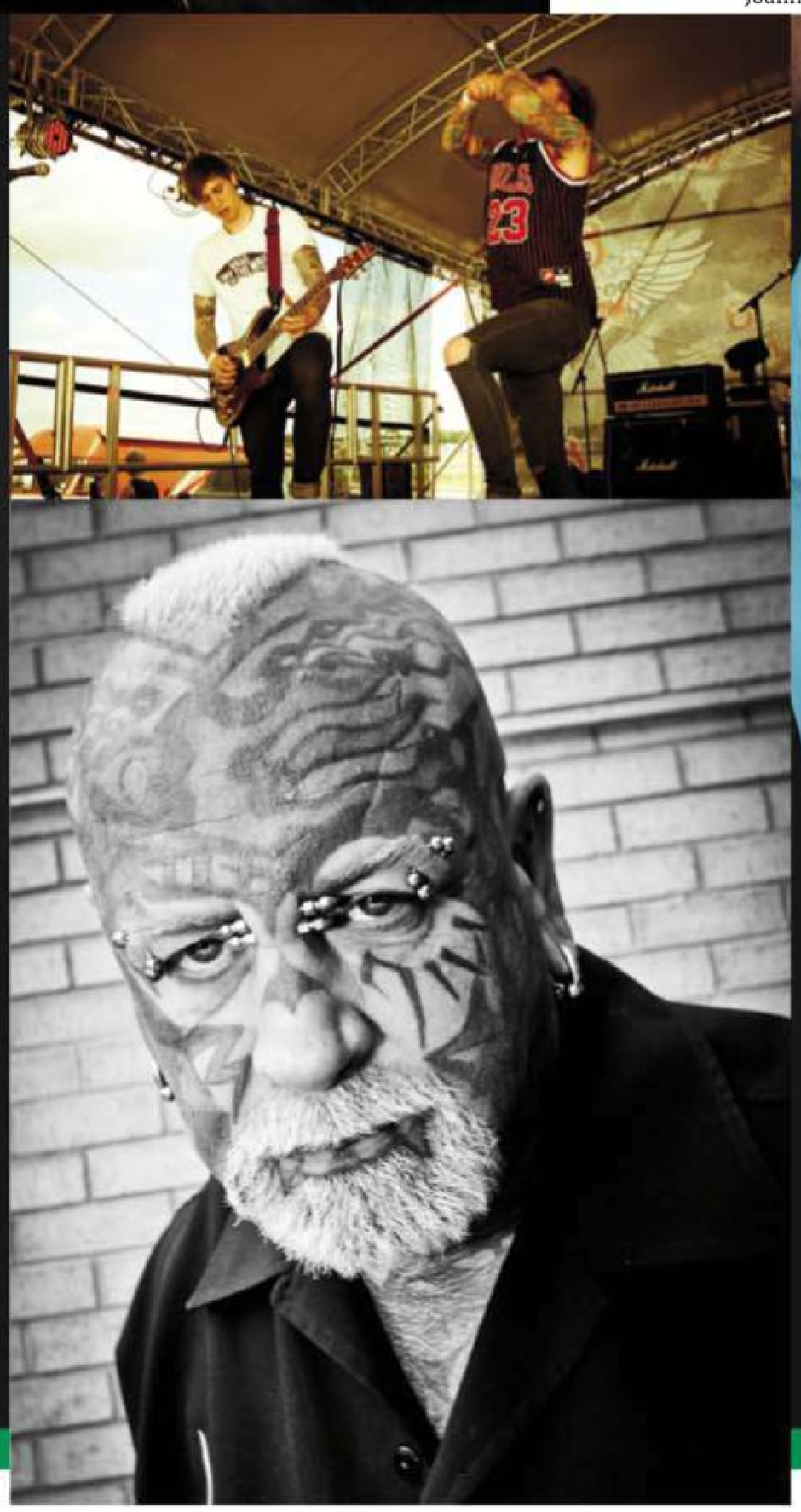
Joanne Moore by Kosa at Art Line





WINNER BEST CELTIC/TRIBAL

Jim Bailey by Podge at Podge's Tattoos





WINNER BEST LARGE BLACK & GREY

Greg by Anabi at Anabi Tattoo

Time totally flew by culminating in the main event of the day – the Tattoo Masters' Ball. Full details of the winners of the awards you can find in a box lurking somewhere within these pages, but all in all, it was a firecracker of an evening. Our resident – and very popular – host this year was Paul Sweeney who stood in for the (and I quote directly from Jim himself) "windswept and interesting" Mr Smallman, who had prior commitments at the Fringe festival. There was Karnage Karaoke, drinking and one hell of a lot of catching up to be done, which eventually and rather hazily led into...



SATURDAY

And they're open! The doors that is – and the whole of Doncaster Racecourse was transformed in minutes from a place in which people looked liked they 'might soon be busy' into a joint that was teeming with life. Within a half hour or so, there wasn't one booth not buzzing with action – and there was some seriously hot shit going down too. The team at Cock A Snook where turning over some seriously impressive and original work throughout the weekend – quite possibly one of the best studios in the UK? You bet.

> JUST A SMALL WORD TO THANK U FOR YOUR INVITATION – I HAVE SPENT A GREAT WEEK END. THIS WAS A REALLY WELL ORGANISED TATTOO CONVENTION
>
> NOON

Saturday evening also saw the results of the tattoo entries of the day, with possibly the longest line of entrants into the 'Best Small Colour' category that any convention has ever seen. Flanked by a very heavily pregnant Paula Hardy-Kangelos, Dave Perry and Leticia from Triple X, one thing became very apparent early on to me in the judging this year – the standard of tattooing in this country is quite possibly at an all-time high. Aside from those that registered themselves into the comp, there were dozens and dozens from across the weekend that weren't entered too. As I said to many people across the pre-show promo for the event, "if you've never been to a big show, come. Come and see for yourself what goes on here – you'll be blown away by the standards."

Little did we expect to think the same thing, but man, it's great to see...

SUNDAY

Phew. Sunday, bloody Sunday. It's been a long weekend and it wasn't slowing down any that's for sure. Another huge crowd streams in and suddenly it doesn't feel like any of us have been to bed. In fact, I'm pretty sure some of us hadn't. Sunday saw a lot of work being completed and even more new work started – by the time we got to the awards in the evening,



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I swear we were all tattoo blind. We mixed things up for the judging this evening where I was joined by my intrepid colleague, Trent Aitken-Smith, and also John Anderton. Hey – if anybody knows technical ability around here, it's that man. There were some brilliant winners in each of the categories today – there were also some incredible non-winners which is the one time that it really is a shame there can be only one.

Also across the weekend of the Jam – forgive me, the days blurred everso slightly into one – the gorgeous Millie Dollar gave us a show worth a million polaroids, Scary Guy showed up to chill for a while, and the aforementioned Paul Sweeney made an awful lot of fans. Meantime, busy pounding ink, the big guns of Jeff Gogue, Nikko Hurtado and Jesse Smith had moved from the canvases to booths and gathered some serious attention. Also worthy of a mention with some beautiful work that seemingly went on forever (thus working themselves out of the competition) were Victor Policheri, Remis, Tanane Whitfield, John Anderton, Xoil, Noon... hell, the list goes on forever and you can't be everywhere at once.

One thing is for sure though, there has been a lot of trash talked about this industry recently. It's been bigged up and put down in equal

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WINNER BEST LARGE COLOUR

George Mavridis at Tattooligans









WINNER BEST OF SATURDAY & BEST OF CONVENTION

Robert Witt by Henrik Gallon at Gallon Tattoo

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JUST LIKE TO SAY TATTOO JAM WAS AWESOME. ALL THE STAFF WHERE SUPERB AND A CREDIT TO SKIN DEEP MAG!

JASON LING, BROKEN HEART TATTOO

measure. It's been accused of being too populist and the media still like to focus on the scare stories, but if you stand above it and look at the quality of the work being put out and what is available to you as a collector, you've never had it so good. It's high time we started to enjoy this art form every single day and not just at the shows.

THE OFFICIAL BIT AT THE END

It would be remiss of me not to mention the sponsors here, who all contributed to making Jam 2011 what it was: Ouch Tattoo, Sailor Jerry and Cheyenne. Special thanks also goes out to our award sponsors (in no particular order): New Image, Emillion Irons (we need to talk about "bar-tactics" next time bro), Dannys Tattoo Supplies, FK Irons, Infinite Irons, Barber DTS, Blue Banana, Got Ink Apparel, Tattoo UK, C & P Medical, Dark Art Airbrushing, Disturbia, Hex, Stigma Rotary and Black Cat Aftercare.

Bringing up the rear is also this lovely crew without whom none of this would have happened: Initial Medical, Plinth 2000, The Mobile sink Company, Duncan Technical Services (Autoclave) and Willy Robinson (Tattoo Museum). A nod of the head must also go out to the traders, who remain unsung heroes of events like this by providing a different focus every now and then for everybody.
Good work all.

So there you go. Where else would you see Jeff Gogue riding shotgun in a van that's seen many better days as he goes in search of art supplies. Like I said, only at Tattoo Jam...

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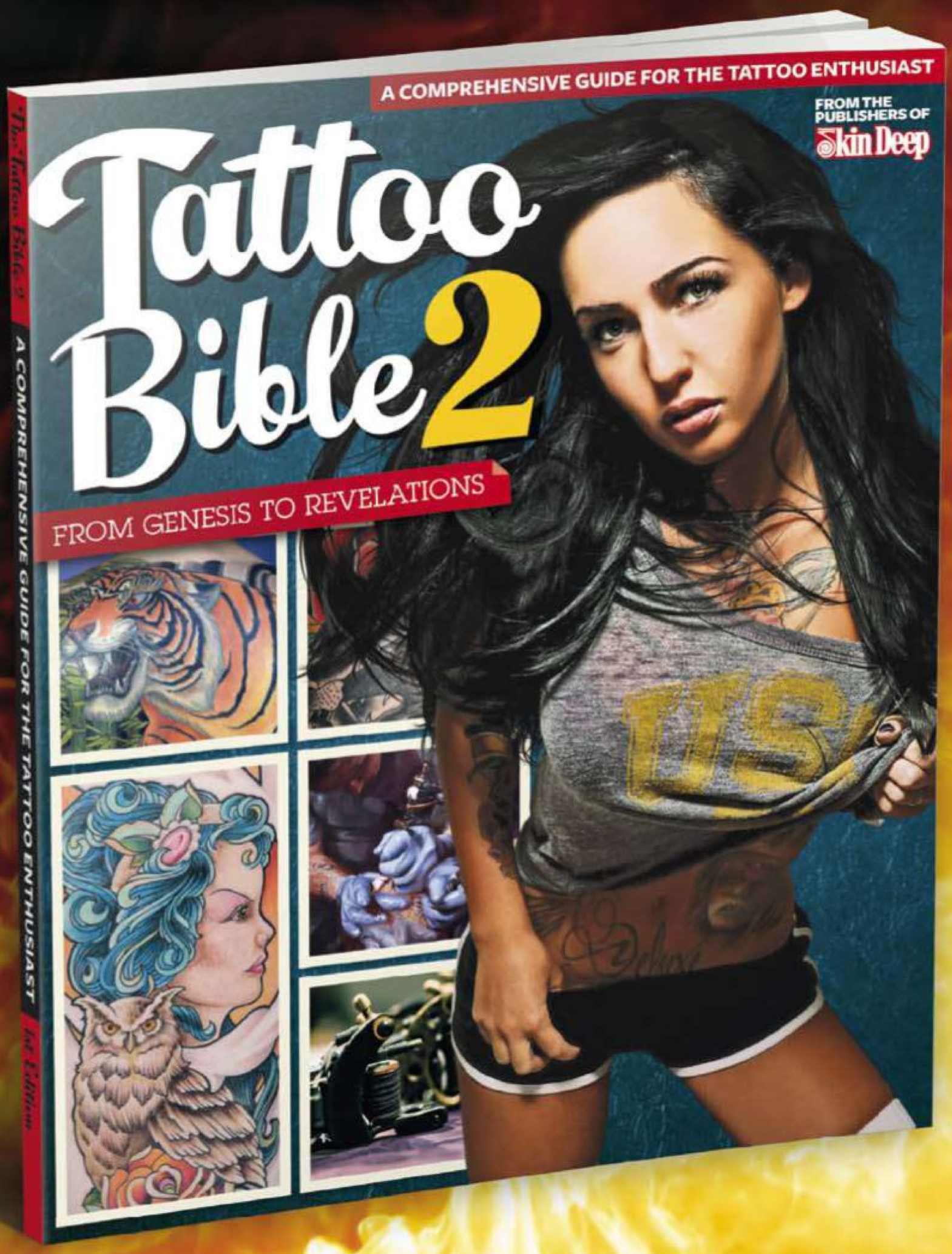
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THE NEW TESTAMENT



When we published Volume One of ***The Tattoo Bible***, tattooing was at a point of immense popularity. Who would have thought twelve months on that its popularity would grow into an even bigger global phenomenon? It is as much a part of popular culture today as our favourite TV shows, films and musicians. Along with that popularity comes a thirst for knowledge and a need for a respected source to answer those questions.

In this – ***The Tattoo Bible 2*** – we once again bring you the essential information you need to make good decisions when it comes to getting your first tattoo. You'll also find great advice from respected writers and tattoo artists. We look at everything you need to know if you're a tattoo virgin thinking about your first time, right across the board to how to get on the road to becoming a tattoo artist yourself and the right way to go about it.

We talk to respected international tattoo artists, look at the role the media has played in the sudden growth in popularity, arm you with a history of the art and discuss the different schools of tattooing. We look at the best in aftercare advice, give an overview of the international convention scene and how you can use it to your advantage and lift the lid on cover-ups. Of course - it wouldn't be a Skin Deep spin-off if we didn't lavish it with some outstanding photography and drop in a few of our best ever features to make this volume an even more collectible edition than the first.

Ultimately, ***The Tattoo Bible 2*** presents you with a fantastic worldview on the industry as it stands today. Just because we're having fun doesn't mean we're not taking it seriously!

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Just stepping inside its doors transports you from the streets of Newcastle and takes you away to another world completely. And this is all before you have even had the chance to meet the folk who ply their trade there; artists and staff who are an equally eclectic mix of passionate and mischievous artists.

The grand overseer of all things Cock A Snook is Kerry-Anne Richardson; collector, artist and now, successful studio owner. Only three and a half years in the business and she has turned a dream into a reality. And as I was to find out when I caught up with her at Tattoo Jam, when Kerry-Anne sets her sights on something, not much will get in her way.

"I had been tattooing for about a year and a half before I decided to open Cock A Snook in November 2009. I was working in another local shop and it took me about six months to find premises, settle on a studio and actually decide I was

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Trent Aitken-Smith Kayle Wren

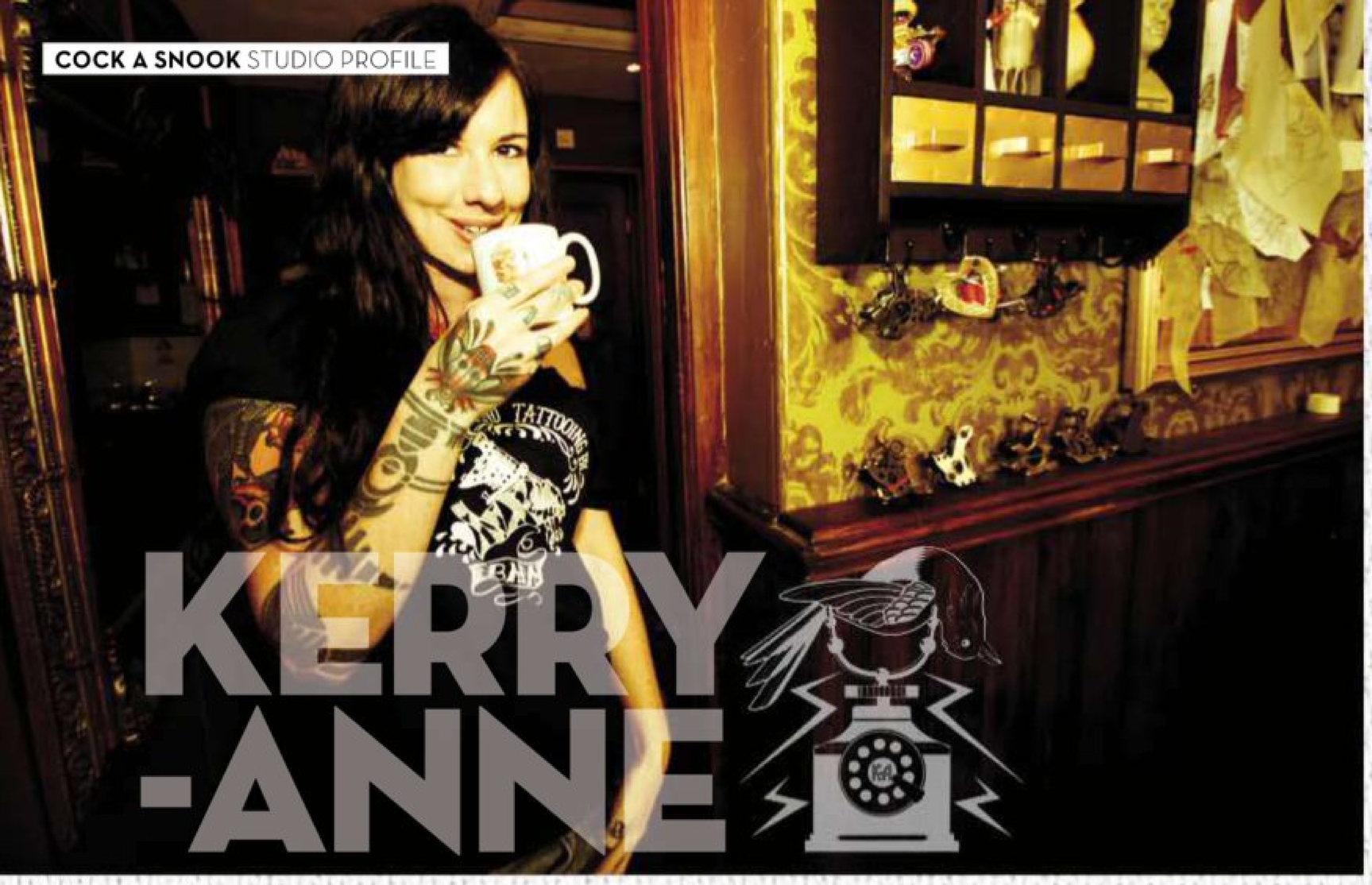
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going to do it. I chose to open my own studio as, in Newcastle, I didn't think there was anywhere else that I could fit in. My style, my work ethic, all of it... I just felt like I didn't fit at all. I thought that there was maybe one shop that I would like to work at. I just felt there wasn't what I wanted in the area, so I knew I had to open up my own shop. I didn't want to move out of Newcastle as I had only just moved back from New Zealand, where I had been snowboarding. I really didn't want to go again.

"Opening Cock A Snook wasn't an arrogance thing or me being overconfident, but I really wanted to create an environment that I was happy to work in. A place that was creative, that focussed on learning. When I opened the shop, it was just me and another young tattooer that I took on. Then it started to get really busy so I just kept taking on more artists. The whole idea of the shop was to get other young artists in who hadn't been tattooing very

COCK A SNOOK



KERRY-ANNE



long, but were obviously extremely focussed and talented, so that we could all learn together. Another thing was, because I haven't been tattooing very long myself, it needed to be an experience that we all shared together. And all the guys who work at the shop have had bad experiences at tattoo shops before, myself included. We have seen the wrong side of tattooing and they had seen how nasty people in the industry can be.

"Everyone we have got in the shop have been very intentional choices, even the guest artists. I have researched and found people that are, obviously very good artists, but are also people that I know will all fit together. I think this is really important when you are working with people day in and day out. Obviously you have squabbles and stuff, but everyone has to have the same goals. And everyone in the shop wants to be as good as they can and everyone wants to learn as much as possible."









OPENING COCK A SNOOK WASN'T AN ARROGANCE THING OR ME BEING OVERCONFIDENT BUT I REALLY WANTED TO CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT THAT I WAS HAPPY TO WORK IN. A PLACE THAT WAS CREATIVE, THAT FOCUSSED ON LEARNING.

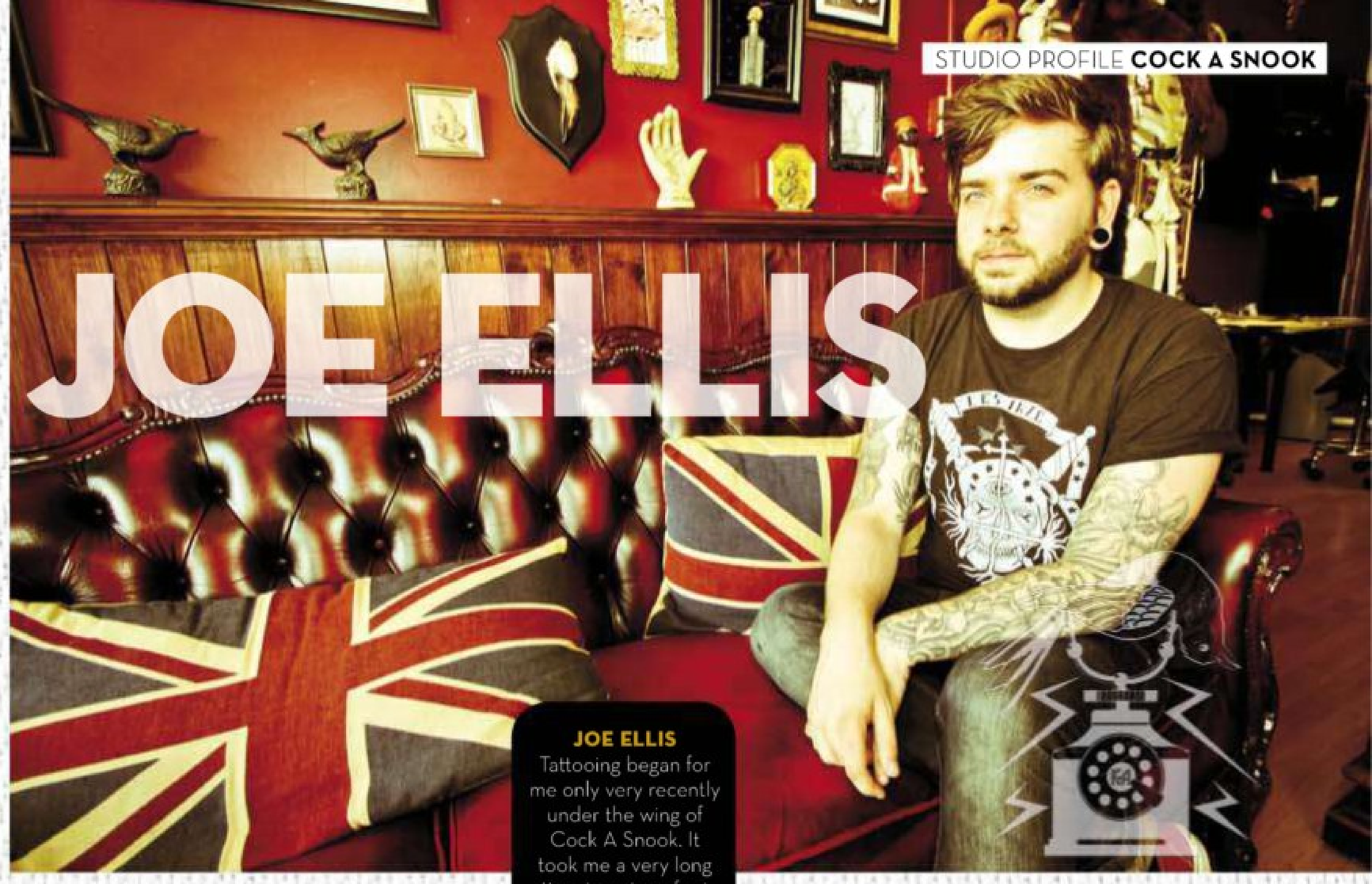
Kerry-Anne has obviously done her research before hiring artists for the shop. Whether it is work or play, the Cock A Snook team are a tight knit group.

"Paul and I worked together at a previous shop and I said to him that when I opened my place, I wanted him to come work with me. I already knew before I opened the shop that I wanted to get Paul in. He's very modest and I think that is very important, especially in a male tattooist. I know that sounds awful but there is a lot of arrogance and ego in the industry and the guys in the shop, none of them have that. Greg has been tattooing the longest



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JOE ELLIS



whereas Joe has been tattooing for five minutes. But he is incredible. I had my eye on him for ages. I got Bailey to come work at the shop because Bailey and Joe are friends and they compete with each other anyway. They both have different strengths so I put them together and already I can see that it is going to be really good. I employed Kirsty (shop manager) about six months ago and at last it is all falling into place. If it wasn't for Kirsty, I wouldn't be here. Essentially she is my boss cause I make her make me do things.

"Now I have the artists I want, I

YOU SHOULD ALWAYS BE FRIENDLY TO EVERYONE BECAUSE YOU NEED TO TREAT PEOPLE HOW YOU WANT TO BE TREATED. I HATE IT WHEN YOU GO TO CONVENTIONS AND YOU ARE WALKING PAST SOME ONE'S BOOTH AND THEY WON'T SAY HELLO





JOE ELLIS

Tattooing began for me only very recently under the wing of Cock A Snook. It took me a very long time to get my foot even in the door of a studio (unless it was to be tattooed!) and I spent a good few years trying to find somewhere to teach me the art, but it was so hard to get people to even look at my portfolio or take me seriously.

I started tattooing volunteers on evenings in the studio around November 2010; it was exciting to finally be where I wanted to be after so long, however, it was probably the scariest experience of my life. After a couple of months, in February 2011, I was set loose on walk-ins and the perils of daytime tattooing. I have been really fortunate in the kinds of work I get to tattoo and I'm greatly appreciative for that, although I don't quite understand why I get to do so if I'm totally honest.

There are a lot of artists and tattoo artists that I look up to. I like to take an interest in what other tattoo artists are doing, but to be honest I try not to look so much because the quality of their work really amazes me and makes me disappointed in myself.

Tattooing for me is everything I've ever wanted to do and more, but it is so much harder than I ever imagined it to be. Working alongside some very talented artists will hopefully help me to learn more and maybe even give me a bit of confidence in the future.



don't think I will be getting anymore in. It's a case of heads down and learn more... particularly me.

Because I set up the shop, I've lost maybe a year and a half tattooing time because I have had to deal with all the other stuff being the person in charge. Being the boss is awful. I don't like being the boss. Thankfully, I am now at the stage where I can get back to tattooing now I have Kirsty. Now I have to keep my head down and start learning because everyone in the shop is so much stronger than me tattoo wise. It's quite intimidating and scary, but it forces me to get better."

Being the boss is hard enough but being the boss in a historically male dominated industry; I ask Kerry-Anne if being female shop studio owner has made it harder.

"Men of a certain age, maybe in their 40s or 50s, they'll come into

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PAUL JOHNSON



PAUL JOHNSON

I started tattooing professionally, almost three years ago, after falling into the industry by complete accident. Six years previous to this, I had studied and worked in music production, whilst spending the majority of my spare time designing small horror-themed comic books. Not having the time to concentrate on what I enjoyed most, I packed in my career in music and worked a series of part-time jobs to fund my love for drawing. Whilst designing band posters and promotional material, I was offered an apprenticeship in a newly opened Newcastle-based tattoo studio.

Here, I had free reign to use the shop space, unsupervised, whilst the studio was closed. This resulted in trial and error tattoos on myself and close friends, for which I am eternally grateful! It wasn't until March 2010, that I began working at Cock A Snook and started to use my own interests to develop my skills as an artist and tattooist.

I guess my love of horror, sci-fi and comic books have greatly inspired my work – ranging from fantastic realism to my own cartoon-like designs. I am not tattooing towards a definite style, I prefer to experiment with my work and not be restricted by the boundaries of a singular tattooing genre. Recently, I started using photo-manipulation as a design technique; working alongside Kayla Wren of REN Photography to produced blood splattered gas masked girls and other dark, haunting imagery adapted for skin. Along with other projects in the pipeline, we are working on a series of pieces which combine realism and hand-drawn images, from futuristic pin-ups to destructive robots of doooooooooom!

the shop and want a tattoo and half the time they'll want a guy to talk to and if any decisions have to be made, say if someone is not happy with a tattoo placement, when I come out, they're not interested. It's like, 'What? You're just the receptionist or the woman in the back that shoots the babies out'. It's hard because I have a lot of respect for the old school tattooers, but there are still a lot who still see it as a man's world. Everyone else accepts it because there are so many women tattooing now."

And in the same vein, how is the competition in Newcastle? Do the studios support each other or is it every man (or in this case, very competent woman) for themselves?

"I think that tattooing is very different in Newcastle than everywhere else in the country. It is almost like the old 'rites of passage' getting a tattoo here. I've seen more tattooed people in Newcastle than anywhere else. I think it is because everyone is friends, everybody knows each other. All of the arsey shops, they can get on with it. They whinge and bitch but don't concentrate on their own work, whereas if you are friends with the other studios you can learn from them. If something happens, like a little while back one of the shops in Darlington got burgled and Low (Allan

NOW I HAVE THE ARTISTS I WANT, I DON'T THINK I WILL BE GETTING ANYMORE IN. IT'S A CASE OF HEADS DOWN AND LEARN MORE...PARTICULARLY ME. BECAUSE I SET UP THE SHOP, I'VE LOST MAYBE A YEAR AND A HALF TATTOOING TIME BECAUSE I HAVE HAD TO DEAL WITH ALL THE OTHER STUFF BEING THE PERSON IN CHARGE







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SHAUN BAILEY



Lowther, Northside Tattooz) put on his Facebook status to say something like, 'If anyone has seen this kind of equipment to contact him' and they were caught and the studio got all their stuff back. I think a sense of community is important. Low was really supportive when I opened the shop because I was still quite young and I was doing it on my own.

"And I believe you should always be friendly to everyone because you need to treat people how you want to be treated. I hate it when you go to conventions and you are walking past someone's booth and they won't say hello."









SHAUN BAILEY

I'm the new guy at Cock A Snook, having only started a couple of week ago. I have been tattooing just over a year and a half and made the move to Newcastle to start at the studio. It all started when I did a little guest spot a few months ago. Then a few weeks later they asked me if I wanted to come work full-time. I didn't really know what to say at first. I was a bit scared of taking the next step and I got on really well with everyone at Blue Blood (where I worked in Manchester), so I was sad to leave. But it was just something I needed to do to improve my work.

Everyone at Cock A Snook are great and really hard working, they all make me want to work much harder and push myself.

I started tattooing about a year and a half ago, although this was not something I intended to do. None of my family or friends had any tattoos. I went to university to do illustration, but dropped out and generally lost interest as my fascination with tattooing grew and took over. I spent the next few years working on my drawing and never showing anyone, then one day I got the courage to show some of my drawings and they gave me an apprenticeship.

There are a lot of artists that I look up to. Uncle Allen, Jessie Smith, Adrian Edek, Adriaan Machete, Curt Baer, Steve Whittenberger, Dan Morris are just a few, but there are so many.

Would also like to thank Matt Cooley, Polly Tompson and Jemma Jones at Blue Blood – love you all.

I THINK THAT TATTOOING IS VERY DIFFERENT IN NEWCASTLE THAN EVERYWHERE ELSE IN THE COUNTRY. IT IS ALMOST LIKE THE OLD 'RITES OF PASSAGE' GETTING A TATTOO HERE. I'VE SEEN MORE TATTOOED PEOPLE IN NEWCASTLE THAN ANYWHERE ELSE

The fun and friendly atmosphere of Cock A Snook is definitely a major draw for the studio, with crazy activities like 'Hide A Snook' (check out their Facebook page) to liven up the day when things are quiet.

When you have a look through Cock A Snook's artist portfolios, there is no doubt that Kerry-Anne has chosen artistically sound tattooists who individually are strong enough to stand alone in their chosen field or style. But the really amazing trick she has managed to pull, is seeing that when working together they are five times stronger, offering the customer anything they need in one shop.

"I never wanted a shop that focused on one style. I want people that do all different things because that then covers all the bases. So if a customer comes in, we know that we can get them an artist that can do that work. And even if they want a particular style and we haven't got someone who specialises in that particular style, we might have a guest artist that's come in. But we try and match the customer to the

IT'S HARD BECAUSE I HAVE A LOT OF RESPECT FOR THE OLD SCHOOL TATTOOERS BUT THERE ARE STILL A LOT WHO STILL SEE IT AS A MAN'S WORLD. EVERYONE ELSE ACCEPTS IT BECAUSE THERE ARE SO MANY WOMEN TATTOOING NOW

style. I wouldn't have a shop that did all one style because that excludes so many people and everyone has got different tastes. It could be a very bad business decision. And also, you are only going to get one type of customer or tattoo and that could get very boring.

"Each of the artists that we've got in the shop, they can cover most styles, but everyone has different styles that they like, so if a customer comes in with an idea, you know pretty much straight away who is going to do it. To be honest, even though we are a street shop, we don't get so many walk-ins. Most people want custom stuff. A lot of the time, the customer has already made up their mind which artist they want before they come in. We basically share everything. We put everything into the pot and share because we are all still very young tattooists."

And this seems to be the key to the whole success of Cock A Snook, everyone working to one common goal rather than pulling in different directions. As we wrap things up, I can't help but ask Kerry-Anne about Cock A Snook's décor. Call it junk shop collecting or high end interior design, it makes no difference because it works wonders.

"A lot of the objects in the shop are from my own house. My old housemates used to complain that I collected shit. I used to go into skips and charity shops. They basically used to be always telling me off and I just started slowly moving it to the shop. Now most of it just goes straight to the shop. I can't help myself. If I see some taxidermy or an unusual antique I just have to have it. I think you have to be surrounded by beautiful things to be inspired and I wanted the customers to feel comfortable."



GREG SCOTT

GREG SCOTT

I am 25 and I have been tattooing for six years now. I had a curious fascination with tattoos along time before ever picking up a tattoo machine. Because none of my family were tattooed it wasn't until I went with a friend, who got tattooed, that my curiosity became so much more. It was over a year after this that I plucked up the courage to actually get tattooed. Even at this point my fascination had not stretched to even consider this could be a profession for me. It was quite a few drawings and quite a few tattoos later that I was offered an apprenticeship. It wasn't the greatest of apprenticeships, but I realized very quickly that you have to take the chance and endeavor to make the most of it. My foot was in the door and I spent the next few years working hard.

When Kerry-Anne offered me the chance to come work at her studio I knew it was an amazing opportunity. I had already seen some of her work and the amazing studio she had. Cock A Snook is a great studio to work at, everyone is so artistically driven but so laid back at the same time! It's such a creative environment, we work hard, we help each other... and maybe play the odd practical joke on one another.

There are so many tattooists that I am amazed by and aspire to be like, but I have always found the biggest influence on my work has been the people I have and do work with... and I have been lucky enough to be working with four other great artists here at Cock A Snook.



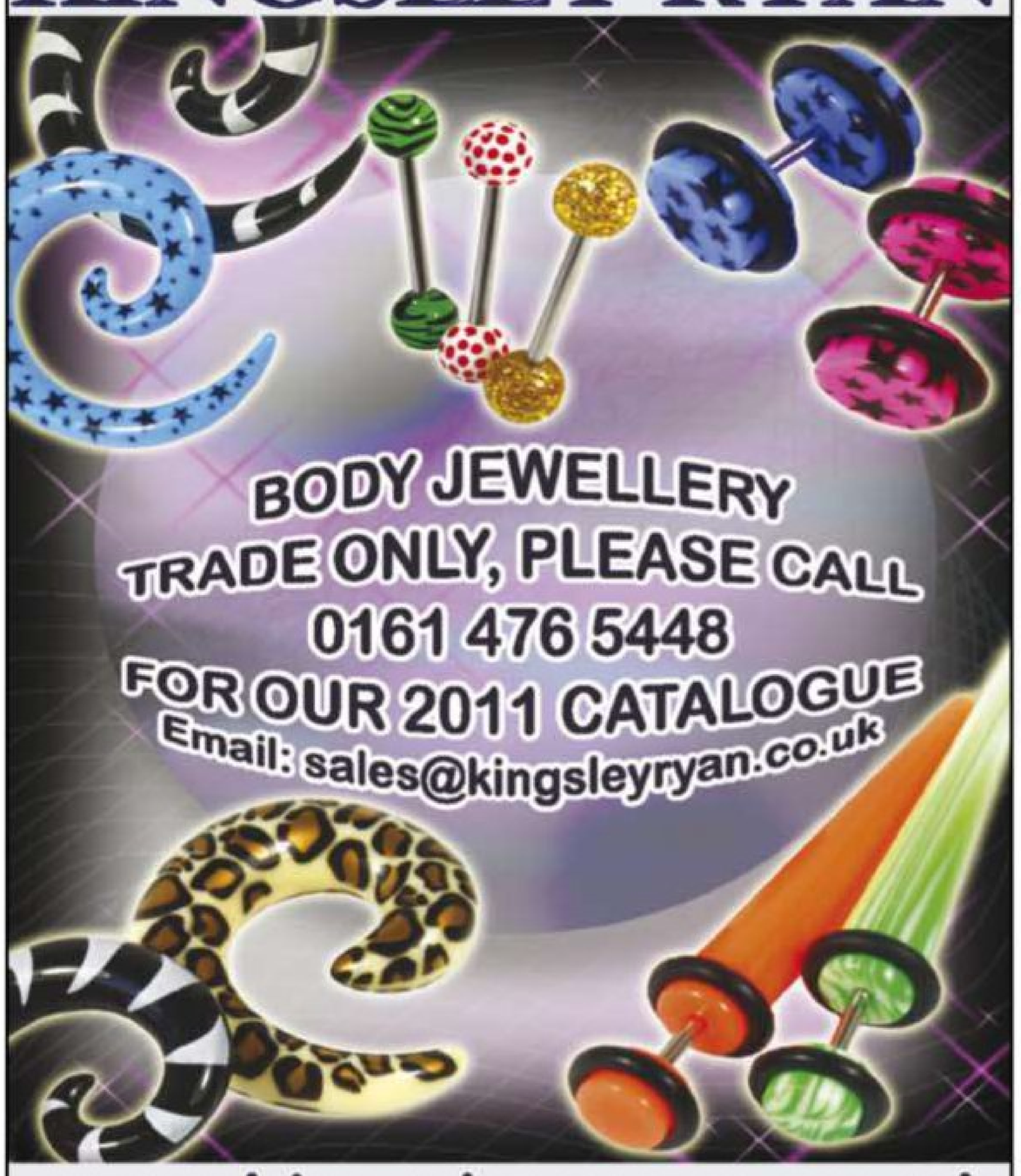






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FROM VANCOUVER

with Love

It's not every day one hears of a backpacking trip across Europe inspiring a complete career change and the founding of a tattoo shop – and it's even less often one comes across a successful all-female shop. It doesn't take long to realize Luvia Petersen and Justina Kervel are anything but ordinary



LIQUID AMBER TATTOO
62 Powell Street
Vancouver, BC
Canada

www.liquidamber tattoo.com

Barbara Pavone
Liquid Amber

Their story is one of unforeseen inspiration and seized opportunities, and it only seems fitting that I first heard of Petersen and Kervel's Vancouver shop, Liquid Amber Tattoo, at a heavy metal show about 5,000 kilometres away in Montreal.

At the start of my night out on the town, I hadn't in the least bit suspected that I'd be striking up a conversation with Liquid Amber Tattoo's former receptionist, Kristin Ory. It may just have been my love for the curious and all that is out of the ordinary, but the moment Ory mentioned the words "all-female shop", I was intrigued. One look at the Frankenstein portrait done by Kervel on her thigh (which just so happened to have been crowned 'Best Small Black and Grey Tattoo' at this year's WestCoast Tattoo and Culture Show) and I was sold. I had to know more.

Getting in touch with Petersen and Kervel in the days that followed, it became evident from early on in our interview that this was not going to be your run-of-the-mill tattoo tale.

"Just over ten years ago we traveled to Europe and on that trip we stumbled upon the most amazing art studio," begins Petersen. "The artist's name is Philippine and she works in all sorts of mediums. In the middle of the room was one tattoo chair



and we spent some time with her as both of us received tattoos. Philippine agreed to let Justina tattoo herself the following day and at that moment, she was hooked and I was inspired."

On their return home to Vancouver, British Columbia, the duo set their sights on opening up a similar style of shop, dropping their previous engagements without hesitation, the last trace of their non-tattoo past somewhat immortalized in their

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effects to my artistry. Transferring an image from someone's head to paper takes a large dose of patience and imagination. I have also noticed an improvement in my paintings, as I am more comfortable using colors now, while using my newfound patience to develop more detail in my work."

For Petersen, who is not a tattoo artist herself, co-founding a tattoo shop had its own distinct learning curve, but it didn't stem from where one might initially expect. "I have been able to learn the ins and outs of tattooing theory by listening to Justina speak to clients and by asking

JUSTINA KERVEL ON... HER FIRST TATTOO

The very fist tattoo I did was a stick man on myself and yes, I still have it. I was 21 years of age at the time. I don't have the heart to cover him up. Besides, he is a reminder that my career used to be a dream and that dreams can become reality when you pursue them and believe in yourself.

TATTOOING HAS HAD SOME UNEXPECTED BUT VERY WELCOME SIDE EFFECTS TO MY ARTISTRY. TRANSFERRING AN IMAGE FROM SOMEONE'S HEAD TO PAPER TAKES A LARGE DOSE OF PATIENCE AND IMAGINATION

new venture's name.

"Before Justina was a full-time tattoo artist she was a landscaper," says Petersen. "We used to play a game where I would point at trees and flowers and she would name them. One day I pointed at a liquid amber tree and as soon as I heard the name I said, 'That sounds like a good name for our tattoo shop'."

For Justina Kervel, who has been an artist for as long as she can remember, tattooing never crossed her mind until she had the opportunity to try it during that fateful European adventure. After that, it didn't take much convincing or arm-twisting for her to turn to tattooing in the hopes of launching a new, more passionate full-time career.

As she soon discovered, it was the best thing she could have done for her art: "Tattooing has had some unexpected but very welcome side





JUSTINA KERVEL ON... BEST ADVICE SHE'S RECEIVED

Don't go too deep. That was what Philippine told me and I have applied it to many aspects of my life.

questions. Learning to run a business was the steep learning curve," she says. "If I did something wrong, we paid the price. However, hard work and the commitment to succeed have paid off."

Being a unique breed of tattoo creature, Petersen and Kervel knew from the moment their idea was conceived that there was one thing in particular they wanted to do differently. Although men have worked at Liquid Amber in the past, it is now a female-only shop and something tells me Petersen and Kervel are not about to go messing with a good thing.

"Women provide a gentle, caring, almost motherly atmosphere that we wanted for Liquid Amber Tattoo," explains Petersen. "At this time, we happen to have an all-female crew, which is working out great. We have been well received by clientele who seek us out just because we are all-female."

But no matter how open and forward-thinking the tattoo industry and community appear to be becoming, there are still (unfortunately) times that showcase just how closed-minded they can really be. "When we attend tattoo conventions we are reminded tattooing is still a male-dominated industry," admits Petersen. "'So, where are your tattoo artists?' we get asked. 'Right here', I respond with a big proud smile on my face. I don't mind one bit that we don't fit the mould."

And their challenging of norms certainly doesn't stop there. No sir. "Another misconception is that tattoo artists should adorn themselves with tattoos from head to toe. With our group, this is simply not the case. Although we all have plenty of tattoos, some of us choose locations which aren't visible," says Petersen and laughs, "With clothes on, that is."

Based in Vancouver, Liquid Amber is privy to a mixed clientele, which is reflective of just how diverse Canada's eighth largest city is. "Depending on what neighborhood you're in, you may see scenesters rocking new school tattoos on Main Street or a fantasy tattoo on an



earthy person on Commercial Drive," says Petersen.

Devoted to satisfying the widest possible spectrum of the tattoo-loving population, Liquid Amber strives to always offer clients the opportunity to choose from a group of artists as diverse as Vancouver's community. In fact, to ensure their standards were met, Kervel herself apprenticed the three other ladies who are currently working at the shop, permanently marking the

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AT THIS TIME, WE HAPPEN TO HAVE AN ALL-FEMALE CREW, WHICH IS WORKING OUT GREAT. WE HAVE BEEN WELL RECEIVED BY CLIENTELE WHO SEEK US OUT JUST BECAUSE WE ARE ALL-FEMALE

population: Jenny Jarrett, Kylie Gibson and Rene Botha. And in case you're wondering, each artist does in fact have tattoo roots as interesting as those of the shop's founders.

Jarrett, who has been at Liquid Amber the longest, "came to the shop one afternoon bearing orchids and a portfolio. Right away Justina was sold by Jenny's amazing portfolio and the sweet gesture of the orchids," says Petersen of the black and grey tattoo specialist.

Gibson began as the shop's receptionist but after bringing in an original painting to hang on one of the walls, she secured her position as a future artist. "The next day Kylie brought in the rest of her portfolio and was an apprentice the day after that," remembers Petersen. The detailed artwork caught Justina's eye and Gibson now specializes in tattoos as bold and colorful as her art on canvas.

For Botha, it all began, as many brilliant ideas do, over some alcoholic beverages. "Rene was a friend of a friend who, over beers one night said she wanted an apprenticeship," says Petersen. With a portfolio that showcased unique "dark, sketchy, linear drawings similar to those of Derek Hess," it was a style the shop just had to add to its repertoire.

Having just celebrated their landmark ten-year anniversary, Petersen took a moment to think about the shop's history, searching for its most memorable moment to date. "The day our accountant looked at us and said, 'Congratulations, you made money this year!' I remember looking at Justina and saying something like, 'Wow, we made money, I wonder what else we can accomplish?'" she says initially.

But success surely cannot solely be quantified by a good bottom line, at least not according to Petersen, and she quickly continues, "Although actually making money was an exciting by-product of following our dreams, it hasn't been our greatest accomplishment. When we started Liquid Amber we made a commitment to ourselves that the art

and our clients' satisfaction would be the driving forces towards continual improvement. We feel that over the past ten years we have been able to adhere to this pledge and that makes us proud."

As for the decade ahead, the shop's future goals are, in true Liquid Amber style, just as ambitious. "Liquid Amber Tattoo will be an appointment-only boutique studio," envisions Petersen. "We will have an exchange program where our artists get to switch spots with other select artists from all over the world [and they] will choose the tattoos they take on, producing an environment that encourages growth for the artists and yields the best work possible for the clients."

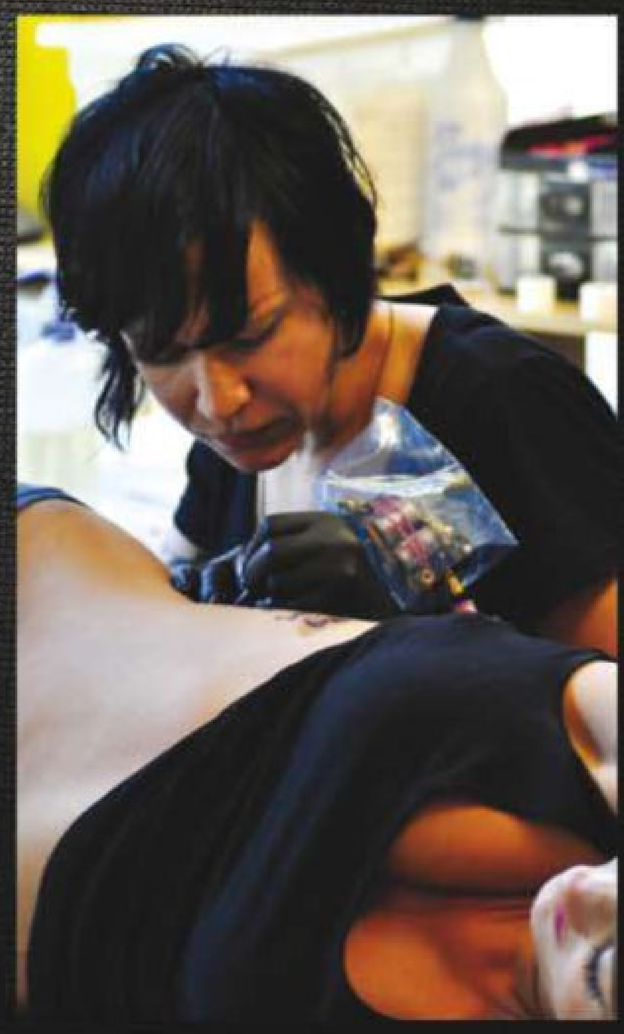


ANOTHER MISCONCEPTION IS THAT TATTOO ARTISTS SHOULD ADORN THEMSELVES WITH TATTOOS FROM HEAD TO TOE. WITH OUR GROUP, THIS IS SIMPLY NOT THE CASE. ALTHOUGH WE ALL HAVE PLENTY OF TATTOOS, SOME OF US CHOOSE LOCATIONS WHICH AREN'T VISIBLE

Laughing, she can't help but add, "until then, we recognize and appreciate the lower back butterflies and tribal barcode insignias, as we wouldn't be in business without them."







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6th Krakow Tattoofest

A WORLD APART

In something of a coup, this issue we had the opportunity to get behind the scenes of the 6th Krakow Tattoofest with a great insiders report from the man who drives the car year after year – Aleksandra Skoczylas. Enjoy!



With the 6th Krakow Tattoofest now behind us, our emotions have fallen slightly as we return quickly to daily duties – like working on the next issue of our magazine which means not slowing down. I have to admit that this years planning was easier than normal because most of the organisational and logistical matters were already in place. Despite that, we have aimed the tattoo and festival interest at a much larger group of people than ever before and worked hard on drawing the attention of foreign tattoo lovers to the Polish scene and Tattoofest.

Every year, I consider that we still have a lot of work to do, but on the other hand, continued interest in the phenomenon of tattooing and the rising level of customer awareness is plain to see. Over time, tattoo has become more and more interesting and the environment is certainly now orientated towards the individual recipient.

> THE STAGE WAS DOMINATED BY THE MOST AUTHENTIC TATTOOS, PRESENTED IN NINE COMPETITIVE CATEGORIES. NOTEWORTHY IS THAT, BEYOND TOP NOTCH ARTISTS, WHO ALWAYS PERFORM WELL IN THE EYES OF THE JURY, AMONG THE WINNERS THERE WERE SOME NEW PEOPLE

From experience, I know all too well how difficult it is to meet the expectations of the people. The more I realise that in this complex mosaic of an audience, fans of tattooing and art lovers, the different attitudes and needs are plain to see. The main task is to try to please everyone. Last year, the fifth Tattoofest was connected with all-day concerts and a graffiti jam organised in front of the 'Chemobudowa' hall. This year, we focused primarily on the interior of the hall and decided to reorganise the exhibition space slightly by reducing the area and setting up booths only on the ground floor.

With a larger attendance than last year, it turned out that space to work for artists or to enjoy scenic attractions and competitions was not limited. Upheld by the opinion of many people with whom I spoke, it definitely made the event more consistent. The solution turned out to be so good that even a different spacing of the booths and marginally reducing their number, did not affect the number of invited tattoo artists. We managed to attract the leaders

Aleksandra Skoczylas As credited



OUT & ABOUT

Kraków, the unofficial cultural capital of Poland, was named the official European Capital of Culture for the year 2000 by the European Union. It is a major attraction for both local and international tourists, attracting some seven million visitors a year. Major landmarks include the Main Market Square with St. Mary's Basilica and the Sukiennice Cloth Hall, the Wawel Castle, the National Art Museum, the Zygmunt Bell at the Wawel Cathedral, and the medieval St Florian's Gate with the Barbican along the Royal Coronation Route.

in the Polish tattoo scene, some interesting rookies and a lot of foreign artists. Many of them appeared in Krakow again, for some it was even traditional for them to come to their favorite convention.

I will not mention all the artists, but I have to thank very much for coming Robert Hernandez, a French team that came up with Jee Sayalero and Dimitri HK, Jack Ribeiro, Fat and a large representation of the Hungarian scene. It was also extremely pleasing meeting with Tom 'Sugar' and Jammes that have both worked for years in the UK.

I was also more than happy at the attendance of several tattooists, who I sought personally; Sandor Pongor and Tibor Galiger from Hungary, Mr. Halbstark and the phenomenal Den Yakovlev. Fortunately, this year Liorcifer also reached us. Despite the vicissitudes of lost luggage and the inability to work on Saturday, it is very likely that he will be our guest every year from here on. We could





Pawel Gawkowski, Panteon, Bialystok











Tofi, Ink-Ognito, Rybnik







Tom Lennert,
Evil Fantasies, Niemcy

Den Yakovlev,
Negative Karma, Rosja



Broda, Stara Baba, Warszawa

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Tibor Galiger, Wegry





Den Yakovlev, Negative Karma, Rosja





Pawel, Panteon, Bialystok











Tofi, Ink- Ognito, Rybnik



AgRypa, 9th Circle, Krakow

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not do without these adventures! It is not only tattooist who are dogged by them this year, but also Sana, who was to appear with her performance 'Hannya'. When I received the call on Thursday morning that due to problems with transport, she might not get to Krakow, for a moment I felt terrified. Fortunately, a few hours later it turned out that Sana with Travelin' Mick would appear at the convention. I think that without Sana's performance, the event would not be the same! Everyone watched breathless at her evocative, expressive dance, through which she sensationally managed to introduce emotion, infatuation, love, fascination with sex, betrayal and madness, the transformation in the legendary Japanese Hannya. This motif is well known in the tattoo world, less so the story behind it. It is therefore particularly pleasing that we could present Sana's performance that is strictly connected with the world of tattooing and yet so different from the traditional attractions accompanying tattoo events.

The more standard kind of entertainment was a freak show by Lord Insanity, who from the beginning seriously warned that it is better "not to try at home" what he was presenting on stage. Watching the faces and reactions of the crowd expressing confusion, disgust, horror and wonder, I assume that nobody attempted to repeat any of the tricks later!

Mr. Zabek, who performed on Sunday, could also count on the willing participation of people from the audience in his act. My favorite performances during this year's show, included a fire show performed by the Krakow crew, "Balakolada". During past shows we had decided not to organize this type of show because of safety regulations and 'Chemobudowa' managers' restrictions, but moving the show outside the hall was an instant hit. At the end of Saturday, just after dusk, the group presented a beautiful and impressive spectacle.

Also outside the hall, came into existence graffiti about ecology. Darek from "3fala" (one of the best known street art activists in Poland) with other painters (of course together with the efforts of bystanders, eager to catch a spray can) created some motivating works under the slogan 'You tattoo / You segregate'.

New initiatives at this year's show that we will certainly develop in the following years were meetings, lectures and film screenings in a conference room. The public have the opportunity to learn more about painting with henna, a tattoo in the film, laser tattoo removal, either to engage in lively debate of Polish blogger and tattoo fan Rdza, tattooer Robert 'Robson' and Dr. Krzysztof Swietek representing Krakow's Academy of Fine Arts about diffusion and impact on high art of tattooing and tattoo art. Tattoos in the lead role can also be seen in sensual photographs by Bartosz Klimek – an exhibition which joined us in the hall of 'Chemobudowa'. This year, viewers weren't disappointed by 'Banana Ink.' The campaign was led once again by Saski and visitors can learn more about the technical aspects of tattooing and test their skills. I must admit that works on the bananas' skins were much better and more interesting than last year.

'Banana' achievements were presented only in the booths. The stage was dominated by the most authentic tattoos, presented in nine competitive categories. Noteworthy is that, beyond top notch artists, who always perform well in the eyes of the jury, among

> WE KNOW THAT THE TATTOOFEST VISITORS ARE TRUE FANS, ENTHUSIASTS AND PEOPLE JUST THINKING ABOUT GETTING A TATTOO - MAYBE EVEN PEOPLE WHO JUST WANT A DIFFERENT KIND OF ENTERTAINMENT THAN IS NORMALLY SERVED BY THE CITY EVERY WEEKEND. FOR EACH OF THEM THERE IS A PLACE

OUT & ABOUT II

In the Market Square stands the Gothic St. Mary's Basilica (Kościół Mariacki). It was re-built in the 14th century and features the famous wooden altar, Ołtarz Wita Stwosza, the largest Gothic altarpiece in the world, carved by Veit Stoss. From the church's main tower a trumpet call is sounded every hour. The call is used to announce the opening and closing of city-gates and ends unexpectedly midstream. According to legend, the tune was played during the 13th century Tatar invasion by a guard warning citizens against the attack. He was shot by a Tatar archer while playing, the bugle-call breaking off at the moment he died. The story was recounted in a book published in the late 1920s called The Trumpeter of Krakow, which won a Newbery Award.





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OVERALL, I HAVE TO SAY THAT THE LEVEL OF WORK PRESENTED IN CONTESTS WAS TYPICAL, BUT IT IS A POSITIVE TERM, BECAUSE OTHERWISE YOU CAN ONLY SIMPLY DESCRIBE IT AS HIGH

the winners there were some new people. In competitions, a sensational debut in Krakow was made by Pawel Gawkowski of 'Panteon', winner of the trophies on several other Polish conventions. Also Spider will be able to decorate his recently opened studio in Gliwice with Tattoofest's award. The prizes also went into the hands of AgRypa, working in the 9th Circle and other tattooist, Aldona of Warsaw Szerytattoo. For the first time convent's award also went to Kuba Kujawa of Jazz Tattoo and David Rudzinski from Gulestus. The prize was a nice surprise for a young Hungarian artist Tibor Galiger. The next three went abroad (to Moscow) with Den Yakovlev and one with Tom Lennert to Germany. Overall, I have to say that the level of work presented in contests was 'typical', but it is a positive term, because otherwise you can only simply describe it as 'high'.

Evaluation of the event itself is subjective – even more difficult when you are involved in its organization, but this year, together with the show of 2008 (the last one that was held in 'Rotunda' club) is certainly my favorite. Both because of the atmosphere, the guests whom we were able to attract and accompanying attractions. We still have a lot of work to do in the future but the direction we want to follow is becoming clearer every year. We know that the Tattoofest visitors are true fans, enthusiasts and people thinking about getting a tattoo – and maybe people who just want a different kind of entertainment than is normally served by the city every weekend. For each of them there is a place.

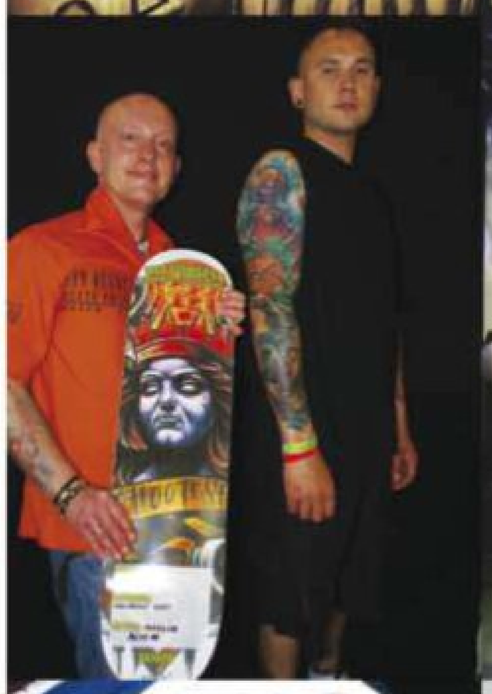
I hope that next year, we will be able to better meet their and your expectations.







Marcin, Alien, Dabrowa Gornicza





















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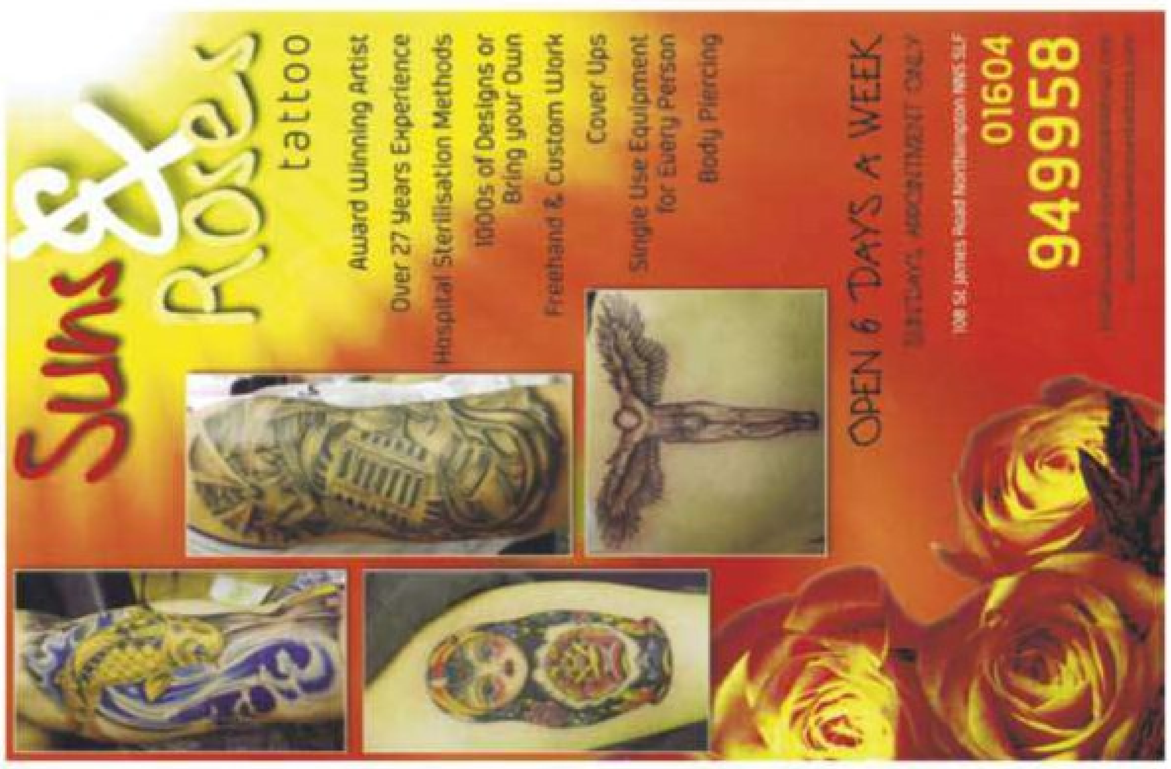
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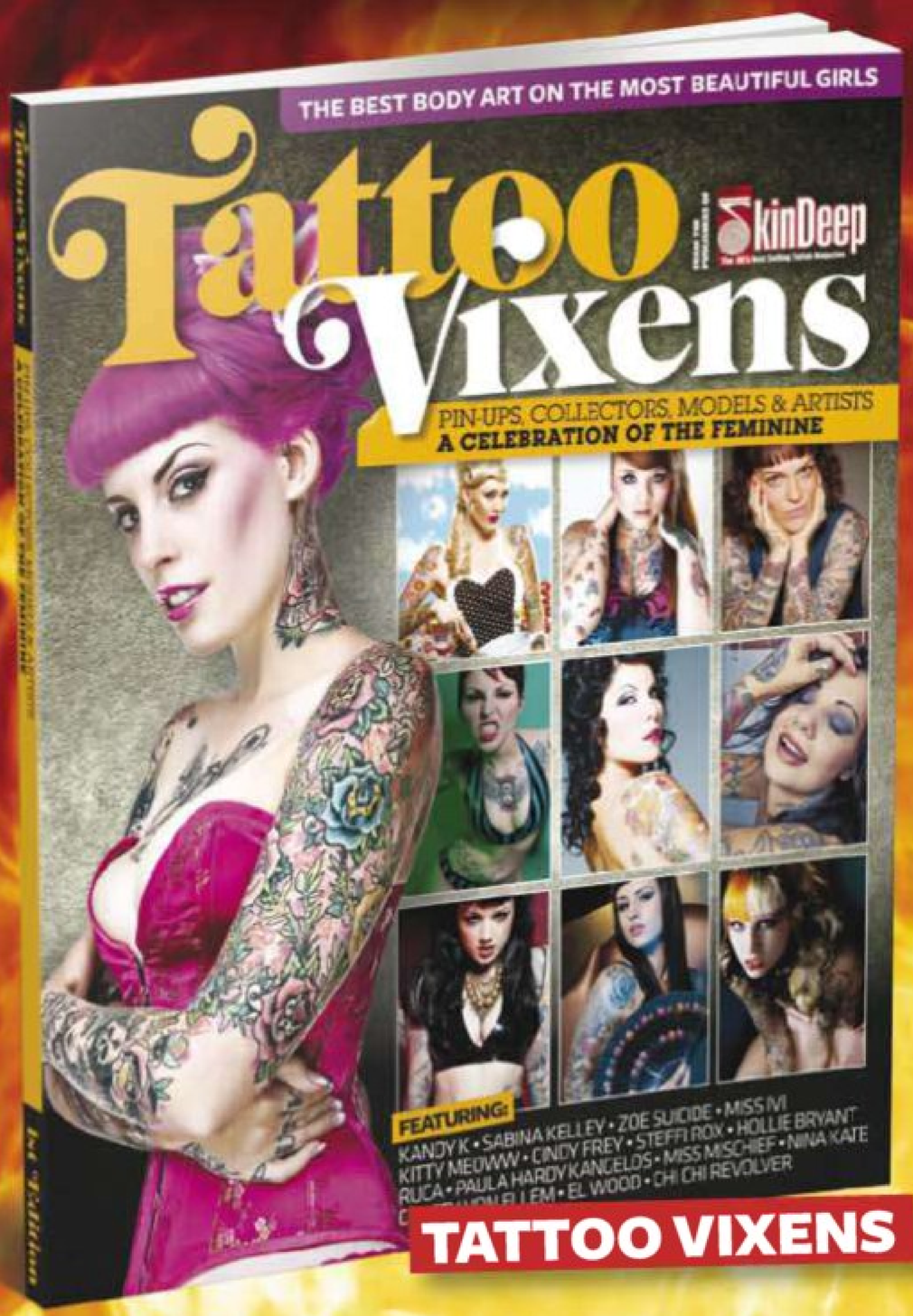
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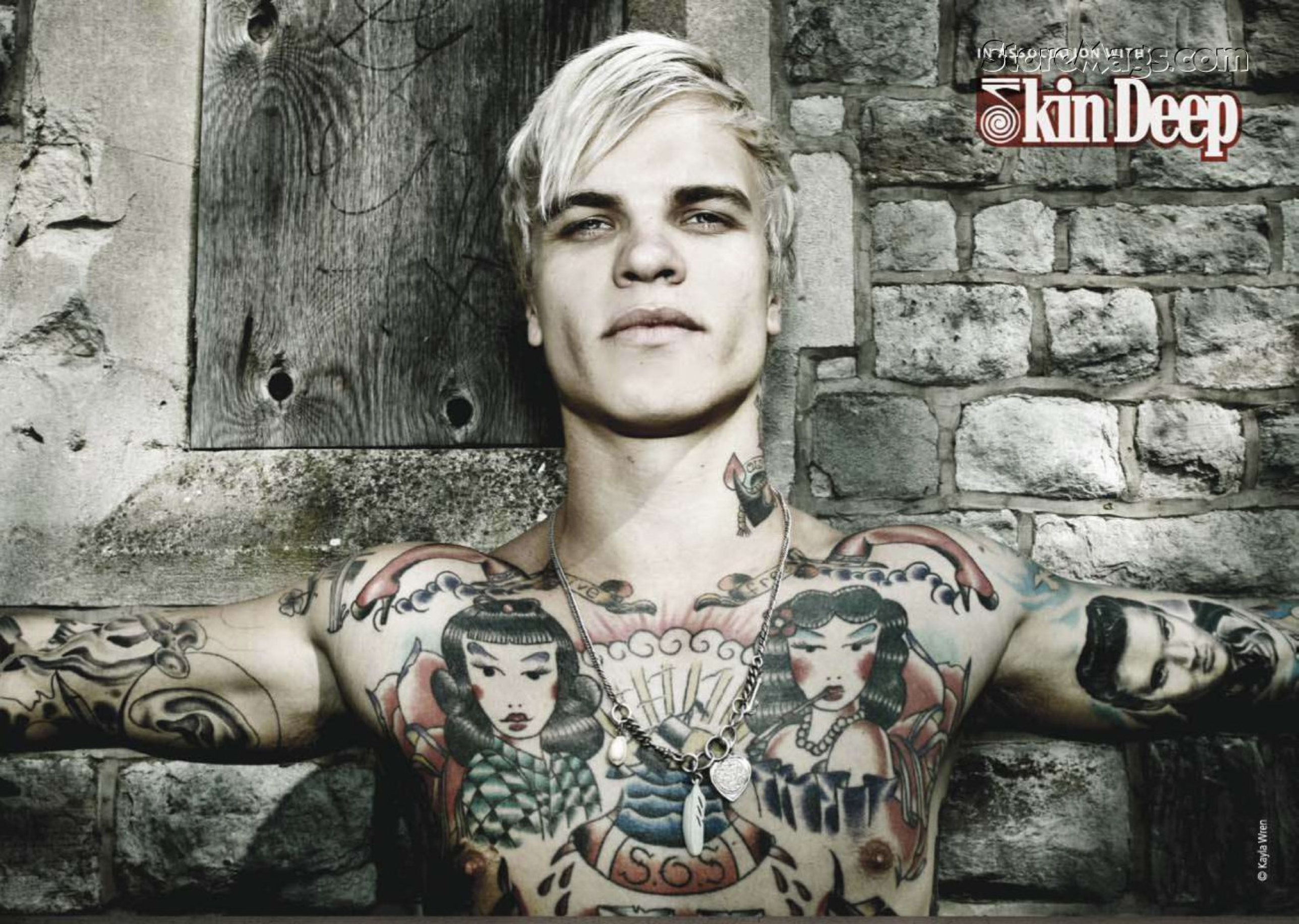
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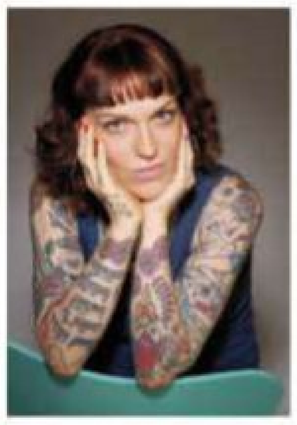
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An eye is upon you

SECRET SIGNS

Hands up if you've ever hidden your tattoo? Maybe you've worn long sleeves to an interview or donned a high necked shirt for dinner with your partners parents? Perhaps you've avoided showing your own family your newly acquired ink, opting for a quieter life, even if it meant a sweaty one?



Paula Hardy-Kangelos

If you recognise yourself in any of these scenarios, and I fully expect that most of us will, I have a question for you – what exactly were you hiding your tattoos from? What was it that were you were afraid of?

Of course, it's natural to fear the judgment of others, especially if that judgment is formed by prejudice – and it's prejudice that is the overwhelming theme in the story of a group of American teenagers who came to be known as the West Memphis Three.

Damien Echols, Jason Baldwin and Jesse Misskelly were convicted of murder in 1994, despite there being no evidence of their involvement in the crime.

Understandably this conviction has been repeatedly refuted by the defendants – and they've found worldwide support in the alternative community for their claims of innocence. The West Memphis Three believe that their only 'crime' was a liking of black clothing, their choice of hairstyles and their preference for metal music. And that it was this 'evidence' alone that led to conviction.

In court, the three were theorised as being part of a satanic cult by a so-called expert witness, a witness that was later roundly discredited. This blatant prejudice was not just recognised, but also related to by a number of high profile misfits; Johnny Depp, Marilyn Manson, Eddie Vedder and Henry Rollins have all publicly stated support for the West Memphis Three, with Rollins promoting a fund raising album featuring cover versions of Black Flag songs, entitled 'Rise Above'. High profile and grass root monetary donations eventually paid for DNA testing, unavailable at the time of conviction – this testing found no evidence of any of the three teenagers being present, but instead found the DNA of another, previously unsuspected person.

In August 2012, after 18 years in prison the West Memphis Three were released under an irregular plea bargain, still stating their innocence. They have vowed to continue their fight for total exoneration and an apology from the state of Arkansas; the state that deprived them of their liberty for over half their lives.

> POLICE OFFICERS WITH TATTOOS ON DISPLAY CAN FUNCTION AS AN ICEBREAKER AND THAT NO COMPLAINTS HAVE BEEN MADE ABOUT TATTOOED POLICE MEN OR WOMEN

The West Memphis Three are an extreme example of prejudice against those that don't fit or perhaps more pointedly, those who do not wish to fit in, but it's a prejudice that many of us have experienced in milder form and quite understandably may seek to avoid. However, prejudice is defined as opinions preconceived without reason or knowledge, and as such it can only be fought by familiarity and education.

So to continue to cover up in order to avoid potential judgment is conversely to reinforce prejudice, implying that our taste in art is somehow shameful, something to be concealed, akin to a guilty conscience. Instead, we must allow our peculiarities to walk outside amongst the 'normal' and in turn, allow those peculiarities to become normal.

Online activism seeks to end workplace discrimination for those that are tattooed, pierced or have other outward signs of an alternative viewpoint and whilst I believe these campaigns have honourable intent, the concept of choice must be kept in mind. Unlike others who may face appearance-related discrimination, we have chosen to look as we do and with that choice comes responsibility. Each of us must exercise that responsibility and find ways to dispel prejudice with positivity.

Relishing our outsider status and actively participating in a wider community are not necessarily exclusive; it is up to each of us to negotiate our place in that community, whilst recognising that the negative opinions of others are largely based on the unknown.

Recently, Ian Pointen, chairman of The Kent Police Federation, has been reported in the mainstream press as saying that tattoos should no longer be stigmatised, that police officers with tattoos on display can function as an icebreaker and that no complaints have been made about tattooed police men or women. Nonetheless, the official line for police in the UK remains as nothing 'offensive' nor 'excessive' – subjective rules which are applied unevenly.

Honesty and authenticity is key, if there is no difference between a law enforcement officer and suspect, or less dramatically, between interviewer and interviewee, then to keep up the pretence of separation is to reinforce unnecessary divisions.

Be out, be proud. Be who you really are, the rest of the world will get used to it... and Welcome home, West Memphis Three.

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